SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL

BY THE

VERY REV. J. S. HOWSON, D.D.

WITH COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS

BY HAROLD COPPING

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN
GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

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William Harvey
with best wishes
J. George Scott

Christmas 1909

SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF ST PAUL

ST. PAUL'S ESCAPE FROM DAMASCUS.
(2 Cor. xi, 32.)

SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF ST PAUL

AND THEIR RELIGIOUS LESSONS

BY

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WITH COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS BY
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PREFACE

It is matter for surprise that a Biblical subject which lends itself so well to pictorial representation as the scenes of the life of St Paul should have been so scantily used in this way. In earlier ages, when Art was employed more than now for purposes of religious instruction, the topics chosen were frequently legends resting on very insecure foundations, to say nothing of their connexion with erroneous doctrines; and it is but rarely that we see the authentic occurrences of the Acts of the Apostles depicted in glass or in fresco. And even now, when the scope of illustrated books for all classes is so considerably enlarged, much yet remains to be done, in elucidation of the Apostle's career, both by accurate landscape and by imaginative grouping.

In the writing of these papers two purposes mainly have been in view. I have aimed rather at the religious edification of the reader, than at mere explanation and description: and I have carefully kept in mind that tendency to unbelief or half-belief, which at present is characteristic of the atmosphere by which we are surrounded. Thus in commenting on the Voyage and Ship-

wreck, I have not dwelt so much on the outward circumstances as on the spiritual lessons of the narrative: and in offering a slight analysis of the Discourse at Antioch in Pisidia, I have endeavoured to point out its bearing on the Divine Plan of Revelation and on the structural unity of the Bible.

Some references have been made to books, which I happened to be reading while writing the papers, and from which I have borrowed something. And especially I may mention Lange's *Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, published by the Messrs Clark of Edinburgh, among their translations from the German.

Few books are more serviceable to the Church of Christ than those which furnish help to the teachers of others. I can hardly hope that the slight performances here presented to the reader can attain this end at all. If they do, in however small a degree, I shall be very thankful.

J. S. H.

PREFACE TO NEW EDITION

Some few alterations, of minor importance, have been made in the text of this work, and the side-notes have been added. The new illustrations are by Mr Harold Copping, and were drawn after a visit to the Holy Land.

A. R. B.

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SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF ST PAUL

I

SAUL AND STEPHEN—JERUSALEM

The Meeting of Saul and Stephen—Paul's Preparation—Paul a "Chosen Vessel"—The Hebrew Boy: in a Jewish Family: a Religious Family: a Benjamite—Saul at Jerusalem: at the Feet of Gamaliel—Saul and the Law—The Training of the Hands—The Furnishing of the Mind—Contact with Humanity—The Meeting of Saul and Stephen—The Trial of Stephen—Saul's Part—Saul's Feelings: Satisfaction: Doubt—Conscience and Conflict.

The meetings of noted men on marked occasions are well adapted to arrest the attention and to fix themselves in the memory. It would be easy to select instances of this kind from many parts of secular history. Our business in this volume is with the sacred history of Scripture. Such meetings as those of Esau and Jacob at the Jabbok (Gen. xxxii. 22; xxxiii. 3, 4), or of Ahab and Elijah in Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings xxi. 20), are very impressive, as bringing contrasted characters face to face, and giving lively illustrations of great moral principles. Or, to turn to the New

Testament, how startling and instructive is the juxtaposition of Herod and Pilate (Luke xxiii. 12) in the midst of the circumstances which preceded the Crucifixion!

The Meeting of Saul and Stephen

So with regard to this juxtaposition of Saul and St Stephen (Acts vii. 58; viii. 1), how memorable are the men, how remarkable the occasion! This meeting of the persecutor and the saint is the right starting-point for a series of papers on the life of St Paul; for it is the starting-point given to us in the Bible itself. But in order to appreciate its full significance, it is desirable first to notice some of the circumstances of the Apostle's earlier life, and briefly to trace his history down to the point when the martyr and the persecutor were side by side.

Paul's Preparation

The features of St Paul's natural character, the family influences which surrounded his boyhood, the effects of his education, the power exerted by the associations of his early manhood—all these things in themselves are independent of, and fall short of, the Divine Grace which made him an Apostle: but they are essential parts of the Divine Providence which prepared him for his career. God works by wise prearranged methods. "Known unto Him" is all "from the beginning" (Acts xv. 18). Whatever service in God's cause any man is

destined for, all the details of his life from the first are made conducive and subservient to the appointed end.

Our attention is emphatically called to this great truth in the case of St Paul, both by his own words, and by the words addressed from heaven to Ananias. It was said to the man who baptized the future Apostle at Damascus (Acts ix. 15) that this new convert was a "chosen vessel." Each of the two parts of the phrase deserves our serious notice. Paul was only an instrument in the hands of God, a "vessel" in which the gift was to be contained and conveyed; but he was a well-selected instrument, a vessel "chosen" and providentially prepared. So he himself said, in writing to a church which was disposed to disregard his authority (Gal. i. 15)—that though "called" in manhood by God's "grace," yet he was "separated" and marked out for his work "from his mother's womb." Thus we have authority for tracing the commencement of his preparatory discipline even to the earliest moment of his existence.

Paul a "Chosen Vessel"

Whatever we can learn regarding his natural endowments, his temper and disposition, the strength or the weakness of his bodily health, the places where he lived, the people whom he met, all such things are to us not unimportant parts of the lesson of his

The Hebrew Boy

life. And it is very encouraging to us thus to contemplate this Hebrew boy growing up in his Greek home at Tarsus, with no appearances to make it probable that he would "labour more abundantly than all" (1 Cor. xv. 10) those Apostles, to whom the Lord gave His commission at Jerusalem. We often despond, when we think of our weak and scanty labourers for the missionary harvest. But who can tell what preparations may at this moment be going on, what youthful forces even now growing up, among the English residents in India, Australia, or Canada, and destined to surpass all efforts hitherto made in the cause of Christ by their countrymen at home?

—In a Jewish Family

Entering now upon details, we must first notice that St Paul was a Jew (Gal. ii. 15), and a member of a thoroughly Jewish family. He calls himself not merely "a Hebrew" (2 Cor. xi. 22), but "a Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Phil. iii. 5). He was no mere proselyte, not one of those who, born heathens, in various parts of the Roman empire, felt the influence of the Jewish religion, and conformed to its worship and observances. His Judaism was in his very veins; and doubtless he inherited all that tenacity of character, and grew up with all that intense national feeling, which have ever been marks of the Jewish people.

We may confidently go further than this: and remembering, not simply what he said at Cæsarea (Acts xxiv. 14) concerning his worship of "the God of his fathers" (for that phrase might be applicable to any consistent Jew), but those more explicit words which he used long afterwards in writing to Timothy (2 Tim. i. 3) of that conscientious service as being inherited "from his forefathers," we cannot well doubt that he was born and nurtured in a truly religious home, that his earliest training was like that of Timothy himself (Acts xvi. 1, 2; 2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 15), and that he grew up from infancy with a deep reverence for the Law, a conscientious sense of duty, and an ardent hope of the Messiah.

—A Religious Family

But St Paul's Judaism is still more exactly defined, his individual career still more closely associated with the past history of the Chosen People. Twice he tells us himself (Rom. xi. 1; Phil. iii. 5) that he belonged to "the tribe of Benjamin"; and this is the more remarkable, inasmuch as, with the exception of Anna and Barnabas (Luke ii. 36; Acts iv. 36), and (indirectly) of John the Baptist and St Mary (Luke i. 5, 27), no other character of the New Testament is mentioned specifically as belonging to any one of those twelve famous clans. No tribe inherited greater memories than that of Benjamin; and doubtless the youthful Saul was early

—A Benjamite

familiar with its history. He himself bore the name of the first king of Israel (1 Sam. ix. 1, 2); and the son of another Kish (Esther ii. 5) was an example of noble and successful patriotism, which the Jews have never forgotten.

We do not exceed the fair limits of imagination, if, with others who have meditated on the subject, we are reminded by the Apostle's persecution of Christianity and his subsequent diligence in dispensing its truth, of the prophetic description of Benjamin (Gen. xlix. 27), that he should "ravin as a wolf, in the morning devour the prey, and at night divide the spoil"; and if we are led to contrast the period when, with his great ancestor's relentless pride, he persecuted the True David, and the period when he joined himself for ever in closest bonds with "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. v. 5).

Saul at Jerusalem

Next to a man's home and his parentage come the influences of his school and his college; and here St Paul is associated primarily and most emphatically with Jerusalem. There is little doubt that he went there while yet a boy. Even if we lay no stress on the old Jewish regulations which seem to mark out the age of twelve or thirteen for such a change, his own words on two occasions appear decisive on the subject. Speaking in the presence of his countrymen, he said that they "knew the manner of his

life from his youth, among his own nation at Jerusalem" (Acts xxvi. 4), and that he had been "brought up in that city at the feet of Gamaliel, and there taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers" (Acts xxii. 3).

At the feet of Gamaliel

As to his instructor Gamaliel, we have the best reasons (Acts v. 34) for classing him with the most upright and candid of the Pharisees, such as Joseph of Arimathæa or Nicodemus, and for saying that the best teacher in the Jewish Church was providentially assigned to the future Apostle.

That Saul belonged to the Pharisees, not only by education (Act xxvi. 5; Phil. iii. 6), but by hereditary prepossession (Acts xxiii. 6), is a point of great importance, most prominently marked in Scripture. His firm hold of the doctrine of the Resurrection was part of his Jewish as well as of his Christian faith. His apparatus of Rabbinical learning was an armoury from whence he afterwards drew invincible weapons in the cause of the Gospel.

Saul and the Law

Another point of great moment must not be overlooked. While "zealous" with the Pharisaic zeal of the "straitest sect" of his religion (Acts xxii. 3; xxvi. 5), and "making progress" in it "beyond his contemporaries" (Gal. i. 14), Saul was feeling and learning that pressure of the yoke of the Law, from which he afterwards learnt that the Gospel of

Christ is the only deliverance. This also was a part of his appointed training. First, "alive without the law" (Rom. vii. 9), because he had confidence in himself, and "went about to establish his own righteousness" (Rom. x. 3), and then finding that "the law was weak through the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3), that in fact it was "the strength," not of righteousness, but "of sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56), the source not of life but of death (Gal. ii. 19), he gradually gained an experience which enabled him, when illuminated from above, to teach others with persuasive power.

The Training of the Hands

But St Paul had another school besides that of Gamaliel and Jerusalem. He had something at least of the training of practical life. Under this head we might class his apprenticeship to the trade of a tent-maker (Acts xviii. 3). Not only by contributing to his own support, and the support of others in after years (Acts xx. 34; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8), did this literally fulfil the Jewish proverb that a man who is taught a trade is "a vineyard that is fenced"; but it must have had some bearing upon his mind and character, and his aptitude for usefulness, by fostering habits of industry, and of attention to detail. But especially we should notice that Tarsus, his native city, was a great emporium of trade, that his family (probably itself a commercial family) must have been in contact with very various

classes of people, and that thus St Paul had opportunities of gaining that experience of men and manners and the business of life, which is so valuable an acquisition to those whose happy task it is to spread the knowledge of true religion.

The Furnishing of the Mind

But one element more of the Apostle's training is yet to be mentioned. Tarsus was likewise a celebrated place of Greek learning, philosophy, and education,—so celebrated, indeed, that it was almost placed, in this respect, on the same level with Athens and Alexandria. If the primary stress must be laid on Jerusalem in regard to the mental discipline of St Paul, the secondary stress must be laid on Tarsus. There probably were acquired the familiarity and the sympathy with Greek literature which we see in his quotations from the poet (Acts xvii. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 33; Tit. i. 12); there also (in part) that variety and versatility of language and illustration, which unfold and elucidate those Divine thoughts, that might seem too deep and difficult for human words. "All things serve thee," exclaims the Psalmist (Psalm cxix. 91); and secular learning has ever been made subservient to the cause of the Gospel.

Contact with Humanity

Nor must we forget one other part of that preparation which we were attempting to describe. We have seen that in intellectual culture he was in contact

with the Greek world. Through his citizenship (Acts xvi. 37; xxi. 39), he was in contact also with the Roman world, in what may be called a political sense; and from the fact that this citizenship was not merely personal but hereditary (Acts xxii. 28), we should naturally infer that his family had some considerable advantages of social position. His relatives were widely scattered. Some appear to have lived in Jerusalem (Acts xxiii. 16), some in Rome (Rom. xvi. 11). Some became Christians before him (Rom. xvi. 7). It is evident that even in early life St Paul touched in many ways that wide circumference of universal humanity which he was afterwards to influence by his preaching and his writings.

Thus in a short and rapid sketch we have endeavoured to describe those early stages through which Saul of Tarsus was brought, before the time came for his collision with Christianity at Jerusalem. Enough has been said to show how intense his opposition must have been, when he became conscious of the great progress of the religion of Jesus. Saul was now at Jerusalem again, in the prime of his early manhood, and at the height of his Pharisaic zeal. Stephen was there too, an office-bearer in the new community, a man "full of faith and power of the Holy Ghost," who did "great

The Meeting of Saul and Stephen

wonders and miracles among the people" (Acts vi. 5-8). It might almost be said that Judaism was concentrated and personified in Saul, Christianity in Stephen. They met, too, on common ground. Without any long discussions concerning the synagogue of Cilicia and the Libertines (Acts vi. 9), the reader may be reminded that Saul was from "Cilicia," and that his family was probably "Libertine," or descended from some Roman freedman. Thus we easily see all the significance of the meeting of these two men. It was found impossible "to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which Stephen spake" (Acts vi. 10). Hence the shorter method was adopted of false (or at least exaggerated) charges, a tumultuous condemnation, and a cruel death.

The Trial of Stephen

We shall not here dwell on the narrative of the trial of Stephen, on his long defence before the Council, the witness supernaturally given to his cause, the furious rage with which his judges heard him say that the Law had been given through angels, and yet they had not kept it, or the sweet gentleness with which he prayed for his murderers, when at the last he had to deal with them, not as offenders against God, to be authoritatively rebuked, but as persecutors of himself, to be freely forgiven. The solemn story will be read to most advantage in the pages of Scripture.

Saul's Part

Our desire is to concentrate attention on the impressive juxtaposition of Saul and Stephen at this critical moment. "The witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul"; and Stephen "fell asleep: and Saul was consenting unto his death" (Acts vii. 58, 60; viii. 1). This word "consenting" is far from expressing all the hearty willingness and eager zeal denoted by the original Greek. And this exact moment was of no light importance to St Paul himself, and to the whole of his subsequent career. How deep an impression it made upon his mind and memory we can gather from his own defence, spoken years afterwards, within the holy precincts where the trial had taken place. "When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed,"—such were the words, addressed first to the Almighty at a time of earnest prayer, and then afterwards quoted to the Jews assembled in the Temple court,—"I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him" (Acts xxii. 20).

Saul's Feelings: Satisfaction

Now what were Saul's feelings when he withdrew from the scene, when he turned his back on Stephen's dead body, and left it to be buried by those "devout men" (Acts viii. 2), who showed more true moral courage than the persecutor? Probably the first

ST. PAUL AT THE MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN.
(Acts vii, 58.)

feeling of an infuriated murderer, when his victim is a corpse, is that of vindictive satisfaction. But Saul was something more than a commonplace murderer. All his soul was excited and heated by the utmost religious zeal. He classed himself, doubtless, with Jael and Jehu, and those who in old times had done service by extirpating the enemies of the Lord; and thus the calmness of self-approval (strange as it may seem to us) would, as he left the scene of murder, mingle itself with the sense of gratified rage.

But what were his feelings when the first emotion subsided, when the still-ness of night came on, when Stephen's body was in the grave? We all know something of the awakening of conscience after a sin has been committed, when the excitement of passion has gradually ebbed away, and the mind can recur to the calmer consideration of that past which can never be recalled. Thus we can all place ourselves in some degree in the position of the successful persecutor and murderer.

—Doubt

Was there no awakening of conscience in Saul's case? Those powerful words of inspired rebuke, that calm and loving forgiveness, that angelic countenance,—had none of these things left any mark even on the surface of his heart? In the very nature of things it seems unreasonable to

answer these questions in the negative. And what the case itself makes probable derives a strong confirmation from the Apostle's own words (Acts xxvi. 14). Those "pricks" must have been something which he felt. It is an obvious thought to a pious mind that Saul's first doubts were the beginnings of the answer to Stephen's prayer; and we should be guilty of no unchastened speculation, if we were to believe that even in Jerusalem the earliest seeds of that change were sown, which at Damascus subdued the persecutor and made the martyr victorious.

Conscience and Conflict

Yet a great mistake would be made, if we were to see at this early stage more than the preparation for St Paul's conversion. It is evident that his conscience did not so far awake as to arrest his career of sin; or rather we ought to say that, till a higher and more direct illumination came, his conscience itself was on the side of opposition to the Gospel. He may have doubted again and again; but, blinded by zeal and rage, and not duly considering the arguments which were already presented to his mind, he supposed it to be a duty to suppress his doubts. "He verily thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts xxvi. 9). Uneasy thoughts may have tended to increase the

desperate resolution and violence with which he gave himself to the course of exterminating the Christians. Here we must leave him, with whatever inward conflicts, in the mid-career of open persecution. The climax and the sudden turning of this state of mind and course of action, will be reached in another scene.

II

THE CONVERSION—DAMASCUS

Conversion: its Meaning—Saul's Conversion—Saul the Persecutor—Saul's Journeys—The Man and his Influence—The Man and his Motives—Days of Sorrow—The Arrest on the way to Damascus—The Relief to the Christians—The Power of God shown: and the Love of God—The Sinner's Humiliation—The Sinner's Discipline—The Time of Solitude—The Response to Mercy.

Conversion: its Meaning

Much may often be learnt by close attention to the literal meaning of a common word. Such a word is "conversion." Literally and simply it means the turning straight round from one direction to another. If a little child is following a path which is leading him into a tangled and dangerous wood, and, in alarm and desire for safety, turns directly back and retraces his steps homewards, this is conversion. And if a man, who has been following the path of sin, turns decisively in the opposite direction, saying, "I will go to my Father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee" (Luke xv. 18), such a man is converted. He was going to hell. He is now going to heaven.

It will be useful to keep this simple view

before us, now that we are about to consider that momentous fact in the life of St Paul, and in the annals of the world, which took place (probably in the year 36) in the suburbs of Damascus. "That way," is an expression used more than once in the earliest days of Christianity (Acts ix. 2; xix. 9; xxii. 4; xxiv. 22), to designate its profession and practice. "Walking" is a metaphor several times applied to describe the activity, straightforwardness, and openness of the Christian life (Phil. iii. 17; Col. i. 10; 1 Thess. iv. 1; 1 John ii. 6). The unconverted Saul had found that "the way of transgressors is hard" (Prov. xiii. 15). From the time when Jesus Christ miraculously appeared to him, thenceforth he "walked in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 4).

Saul's Conversion

What has been said concerning St Paul in the first of these papers may be classed under the head of the natural preparation for his work. We enter now on that period of his life which was under express supernatural guidance. The turning-point from one to the other is that which (though all are not Apostles) is the turning-point of every true Christian's life, namely, a direct interference of the grace of God.

We left Saul of Tarsus in the midst of his active work of cruel persecution. It is evident from the mode in which the subject is mentioned

in two successive chapters of the Acts (Acts viii. 3; ix. 1), that there was no pause in this headlong career, but that the death of Stephen was merely the beginning of a series of similar transactions. The simple words of St Luke's calm and moderate narrative—the "making havoc of the church"—the vehement entering "into every house"—the haling "women" as well as men "to prison"—the "breathing out threatenings and slaughter," as though Saul panted under the vehemence of his emotions, and struggled in vain to give full vent to his passion,—all this shows how true were his own subsequent words (Acts xxvi. 11), that he was "exceedingly mad" against the followers of Jesus.

Saul the Persecutor

It is only by taking into account the expressions used at a later time by himself regarding this part of his life that we come to see the full enormity of his conduct. "Beyond measure," he says (Gal. i. 13), in a letter written long afterwards, he "persecuted the church of God, and wasted it." In speeches which belong to a period still subsequent (Acts xxii. 4; xxvi. 10), he lays stress on his having persecuted Christians "unto the death," and of having given his vote when they were "put to death"; from which we seem to gather that many actually died through his means. A further point mentioned in one of his latest epistles (1 Tim. i. 13) is that he was not only "a persecutor" and

"injurious," but also "a blasphemer" against the holy name of Christ. We can hardly wonder, then, that, not content with the infliction of pain and death, he did his utmost to "compel" believers "to blaspheme," and thus (so far as in him lay) became the murderer of their souls as well as their bodies.

Saul's journeys

It cannot well be doubted that his fury became greater as time advanced. Fanaticism is a growing passion, and does not naturally subside with the sufferings of its victims. Saul's insatiable zeal was not content with Jerusalem as a field for his activity. Bent upon carrying his energetic opposition into "every synagogue" (Acts xxvi. 11), he turned his thoughts to "strange cities," where disciples of Christ were to be found among the Jewish residents. How many of such cities he may have visited in the character of an inquisitor we cannot tell. Damascus, which contained several synagogues (Acts ix. 2), is specified in the sacred narrative, and rivets our attention. Saul went himself to ask for official sanction from the high priests (Acts ix. 1, 2), and presently we see him on his way to that famous city, not simply one of a band of persecutors, but a trusted leader in the unholy cause.

The Man and his Influence

It is worth while to pause for a moment at this point and to notice that we already obtain some insight into this man's natural character. He bent all his energies

resolutely to one end. He was ardent, fearless, and uncompromising. He did nothing by halves. He was active too, and prepared to take long journeys, and to involve himself in trouble, discomfort, and toil. Again we notice that he had influence over the minds of others. The warmth of his zeal was contagious. He easily found companions for his enterprises; and men in high station extended to him their patronage and support. All this we see reproduced afterwards in very different circumstances, when Conversion had changed the end for which he lived.

The Man and his Motives

It is further of some importance (now that we are on the eve of considering that great change) to endeavour to form a right estimate of the moral state of Saul's heart and character in these his persecuting days. We must be careful here to avoid two opposite extremes. On the one hand, his conversion was no mere gradual and spontaneous improvement, no progressive and ripening result of natural conscientiousness. He was going on, and rapidly too, on the wrong road, till the very moment of his arrest. The Physician came, and came suddenly, when his fever was at its worst. But still, on the other hand, St Paul, even at this period, was far higher and nobler than the commonplace, worldly, and hypocritical Pharisee, whose mind was absorbed in material interests, and whose highest ambition

was to obtain, without deserving, the praise of men. St Paul did not act, even then, from motives of pure self-interest. He thought he was doing honour to God. Very emphatically does he assert his unbroken conscientiousness as a continuous thread that ran through both his converted and unconverted life. "I serve God from my forefathers with pure conscience" (2 Tim. i. 3). "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts xxiii. 1). And very solemnly does he call the attention of unconverted men to this fact and to the lesson which it involves. "I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. i. 13).

Not that Conversion is the reward of mere conscientiousness, any more than it is its natural unassisted consequence. Paul's own estimate of the guilt and shame of this period of his life is strongly and sadly marked in epistles written under various circumstances and at different times. The way in which he incidentally reverts to it (Phil. iii. 6) as a ground for perpetual humiliation and regret, is very observable. The stamp of unworthiness which it set upon himself, called as he was afterwards to so high an office, is referred to as a subject never to be forgotten. "I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of

Days of Sorrow

God" (1 Cor. xv. 9). He cannot cease to wonder that "our Lord Jesus Christ" should have "accounted him faithful, putting him into the ministry" (1 Tim. i. 12). And another lesson (different from the former) which he draws from his own conversion is this, that the worst sinner must not despair, seeing that "for this cause he obtained mercy, that in him first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should afterward believe on Him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. i. 16).

The Arrest on the Way to Damascus

But it is now time to turn our attention towards the journey itself, and the great transaction which took place near the close of it. The outward circumstances might well tempt us to a prolonged description. The extreme beauty of Damascus; the greenness and freshness of its surrounding gardens, especially as contrasted with the desert road by which it is approached; the hot noon; the light at mid-day (Acts xxii. 6), overpowering even the brightness of the sun (Acts xxvi. 13); the voice penetrating articulately into the heart of Saul; the terror and the falling to the ground; —in these things we are furnished with abundant materials for a literal representation of what took place: and the imagination may lawfully add other things which are probable. Thus with artists (both in pictures and in early engrav-

ST. PAUL LED INTO DAMASCUS.
(Acts ix, 8.)

ings),[1] it has been conventional to represent St Paul as falling from a horse in the midst of the terror and confusion of his fellow-travellers. All such circumstantial details on the present occasion we leave on one side, that we may attend simply to the religious lessons of this great event.

The Relief to the Christians

And first, it is well to notice the sudden rescue which came to the terrified Christians in Damascus, by this arrest of the persecutor. His errand was well known within the city; and the terror which it inspired can be gathered from the reluctance of Ananias to approach him ("Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints; and here he hath authority to bind all that call on Thy name": Acts ix. 13, 14), and from the incredulous amazement of the disciples when Saul appeared as a fellow-disciple in the synagogues ("Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and

[1] Thus in a Latin Bible of 1564 there is an engraving by Justus Amman, where the horse is the most prominent figure in a very animated and excited scene. In an earlier and much finer work by Lucas van Leyden, about 1509, Saul is represented in his blindness with his hands on those who are guiding him, and the horse is led behind. The Arundel Society has published an engraving of the Conversion, from the tapestry in the Vatican, executed from a lost Cartoon originally belonging to the series at Hampton Court. There the horse running away is very conspicuous.

came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?" Acts ix. 21). God's help often comes when the need is the greatest, and when hope is almost dead.

The Power of God Shown

Turning now to St Paul himself, the first thought perhaps which occurs to us is the thought of God's power. The persecutor was changed into a disciple when at the very height of his fury. All his purposes were paralysed in a moment. The plans which had been arranged with so much care and deliberation, and carried into effect (hitherto) with so much energy, were as if they had never been formed; and the torrent of that zeal, on which so much reliance was placed in Jerusalem for the destruction of Christianity, was turned into the channel of its steady and growing progress.

—And the Love of God

But it is not so much the power of Christ as the love of Christ on which a close consideration of this narrative invites us to dwell. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." These words must have affected his heart with the deepest conviction of his sin, and of the forbearance, compassion, and wonderful mercy of his Saviour. They contain, too, another lesson, which we must not forget. No words could express more forcibly that union of Christ and His people which makes their sufferings to be His, and

marks out their enemies as the objects of His displeasure.

But at present we are following chiefly the personal experience of St Paul; and there can be no doubt that the great change took place in him, not under the coercion of mere power, but through the irresistible persuasion of love. One characteristic of his conversion (and the same is true of every real conversion, however gradual may be the change in the experience of many ordinary Christians) was the recognised prominence of Divine grace, the strong feeling of undeserved mercy.

Connected with this experience on the sinner's side, there is often on God's side provision made for a very humiliating discipline. This, too, is a point to be very carefully noticed in the details of this occurrence. It is observable from the first, and may be traced through various particulars. His falling to the ground, recorded in every one of the three narratives (Acts ix. 4; xxii. 7; xxvi. 14), may almost be taken as a symbol of the humbling of soul through which he was to pass. He came in the full consciousness of power to destroy the enemies of what he supposed to be truth; and he was led into the city, helpless and blind, by the hands of his companions. He came to inflict suffering, and he himself was told "how much he should suffer" (Acts ix. 16). He was not even informed at first

what he must do, but was directed to go into the city, and to wait and be taught (Acts ix. 6; xxii. 10). "The learned Pharisee was sent to school."[1] Nor were his relief and encouragement derived from any famous teacher, but from a simple disciple; and though the revelation of the Gospel came to him direct from Christ, yet his own spiritual help and strengthening came through ordinary means.

Here again, if our subject were different, we should be called upon particularly to notice the honour given by God to His own appointments in the Church. Such a saying as that of Ananias, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts xxii. 16), would lead us over a wide range of doctrine, if we were to enter on such discussions at all. We restrict ourselves to the edification we may derive from considering the arrangements made by God for the formation of a submissive and teachable spirit in the future Apostle.

The Sinner's Discipline

The solitude and isolation imposed on St Paul at this time by his temporary blindness, the abstinence from food, the weakness of body, arising, doubtless, partly from internal struggles, and mentioned by St Luke (Acts ix. 18, 19) in his usual medical manner, are circumstances to be noticed in connexion with what has just been said. Opportunity was thus

[1] Lange *Homiletical Commentary on the Acts*, i. 354.

given for prayer and meditation, in conjunction with deep self-abasement and repentance. The words addressed to Ananias (Acts ix. 11), when commissioned to go to the "street called Straight," and to inquire for Saul of Tarsus—"Behold, he prayeth"—are among the most important and significant in Scripture. They are the mark on the threshold of a life of prayer. The habit of looking up to God for everything, can be traced everywhere in the history of St Paul, alike in the incidental notices of the narrative in the Acts (Acts xvi. 25; xx. 36; xxi. 5), and in the warm, energetic, ever-recurring expressions of the Epistles (Rom. i. 9, 10; Eph. vi. 18; Col. iv. 13); and it is most instructive to see this essential element of Christian character prominent and unmistakable in what we read concerning the Conversion.

The Time of Solitude

With this passage of the Apostle's life we must closely connect a circumstance which does not come to view at all in the Acts, but which is pointedly mentioned by himself in the Epistle to the Galatians. There he says (Gal. i. 16, 17), that when God's Son was revealed in him, one of his first steps was to go "into Arabia." We are naturally disposed to ask why he went there, and what part of Arabia he visited. And no view seems so reasonable or so much in harmony with the analogy of God's

dispensations, as the opinion that he retired at this period to hold silent and solemn converse with the Almighty, to prepare in solitude for his great mission,—and that he visited those desolate heights of Sinai, where, as he well knew, both Moses and Elijah had been in awful communion with God before him. And this view derives a strong confirmation from the manner in which Arabia is mentioned in the same epistle (Gal. iv. 25) as the home of Hagar and the scene of the giving of the Law.

Here no doubt we are rather contemplating the Inspired Apostle receiving strength and illumination from above, than merely the Converted Sinner preparing in penitence and prayer for a life of devoted service to a merciful Redeemer. Yet we must never forget that St Paul's apostleship was laid deep in the foundations of his personal experience. He was not an Apostle instead of being a Christian, but first a Christian and then an Apostle. And we may well learn from this preliminary period of his new career, that strength is to be found, during the early stages of a religious life, not in the midst of bustle and excitement, but in solitary communion with God and in watchful secret prayer.

The Response to Mercy

Contemplation, however, is not the end either of the Apostolic mission or of the ordinary Christian's life; and one more characteristic of a true conversion remains

yet to be noticed. We have already called attention to the recognition of free and undeserved mercy, to the humbling nature of God's good discipline, to penitent sorrow for sin, and to the formation of the habit of prayer, as unfailing marks of the decisive change. We have, in conclusion, to point out that character of willing obedience and activity which emerges from all this preparation. St Paul furnishes us with an example of this from the earliest moment of his own conversion. "I was not disobedient," he says, "unto the heavenly vision" (Acts xxvi. 19). "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts xxii. 10) is his first question, when the conviction of Jesus Christ's presence and love penetrates his heart. From the time when, in obedience to the command, he "arose from the earth" (Acts ix. 8), and proceeded, blind, as he was, towards Damascus, it was evident that his repentance was by no means limited to sorrow for the past and to religious purposes for the future.

Cheerful and vigorous work began immediately, and was continued to the end. "Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues" at Damascus (Acts ix. 20). His zeal, too, was a growing principle: and with all his zeal he was systematic and deliberate, giving reasons for "the hope that was in him" (1 Pet. iii. 15), and taking pains to convince those who argued against him. "Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the

Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ" (Acts ix. 22). Nor have we here, as yet, what is properly to be called the Apostolic work of St Paul. So much the closer is the application of this part of his example to ourselves.

Hereafter we shall follow that Apostolic work through various successive incidents, as with unwearied energy he presents the Gospel, "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile" (Rom. ii. 9, 10). At present it has been our purpose to gather from that event of early Christian history, which, next after the miracle of Pentecost, is the most distinguished, those individual lessons of faith and practice which are applicable and useful to all men.

III

THE GOSPEL AND THE JEWS—ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA

In a Synagogue—The Past recalled—The Synagogue and the Gospel: and Christian Institutions: and Divine Dispensations—Saul at Jerusalem: at Tarsus—Saul and Barnabas set apart—The Arrival at Antioch in Pisidia—The Address in the Synagogue—Its History of the Hebrews—Its Mention of Saul: and of David—Its Relation to the Gospels—Its Allusion to John the Baptist—Its Relation to the Old Testament—St Paul's Tact and Judgment—St Paul's Conciliatory Manner—St Paul's Appeal to the Conscience—St Paul on Justification—The Address a Doctrinal Summary—Its Results—Jewish Opposition: the Turning to the Gentiles: the Consequent Persecution: the Triumph of the Gospel—The Scene repeated—The Dispersion: a Preparation and a Testimony.

To a thoughtful Christian few things are more instructive and impressive than a visit to a Jewish synagogue. It seems to bring before the mind the whole history of the Chosen People, from first to last. There is the closed case or "ark," cotaining manuscript copies of the Law, which are often decorated with silk, and written, as of old, on parchment (2 Tim. iv. 13), opening and closing over two rollers. Such were the "rolls" of which we read more than once in the prophets (Jer. xxxvi. 14; Ezek. ii. 9), and which they use as an image of the gathering up

In a Synagogue

of the heavens "like a scroll" (Isa. xxxiv. 4; Rev. vi. 14). Such "the book" which the Saviour "unrolled" to read in the synagogue at Nazareth, and then "rolled together again" (Luke iv. 17, 20), before He addressed to the audience those "gracious words" of mercy and love.

There too, in the upper part of the synagogue, are the "chief seats," which, with the title of "rabbi," were, in our Lord's day, coveted by the self-righteous as eagerly as the "uppermost rooms at feasts" (Matt. xxiii. 6, 7), and even in early Christian worship were made the occasion of paying honour to men and human wealth, rather than to God and His Gospel (Jas. ii. 3).

Other things might be mentioned, such as the almsbox for the gifts of the charitable, and the separate seats railed off for the women, which are characteristic of modern synagogues, as well as those of old. Allowing for the changes of architecture in different countries and in successive ages, these places of Jewish worship have always been the same. And, indeed, it may be said that this varying adaptation in detail enhances and makes more striking the continuous and unchanging nature of the general arrangement, and renders the synagogue all the more suitable to be, as it were, a type and representative of that mysterious people, which adapts itself to all nationalities, yet ever continues separate and identical with itself.

How the sight of such a place of worship carries our thoughts back into the earlier Jewish history, up to Ezra, and even up to David, and Moses, and Abraham! For not only are we reminded there of that period immediately succeeding the Captivity, which probably saw the first systematic and general organisation of public meetings for instruction and exhortation (Neh. viii. 1-9; Zech. vii. 5), but we remember that the law which was read on those occasions was "the law of Moses," and that the promises which were quoted were the promises made "to Abraham." Again, though we do not know for certain the exact date of the allusions in the Psalms to "the congregations of the people" (Ps. cvii. 32), or to the breaking of the "carved work" in the familiar and honoured places of worship (Ps. lxxiv. 6), yet we may imagine we see the first traces of the synagogues in stated gatherings of the people held in the period of the Kings on the Sabbath days (2 Kings iv. 23), or, earlier still, in the music and enthusiasm of the schools of the Prophets (1 Sam. x. 5; xix. 20). Thus we see how the natural and obvious associations of the synagogue permeate all the preceding history of the Jewish people.

This, too, is very particularly to be observed, that the full and universal establishment of the system in the Gospel times had a most important

effect on the spread of Christianity. In the period between Malachi and John the Baptist, these sacred buildings had been erected, not only throughout the towns and villages of Palestine (Matt. iv. 23; Luke iv, 44; John xviii. 20), but in all the provinces of the Roman empire, wherever Jews resided in sufficient number (Acts ix. 2, 20; xiii. 5; xvii. 1, 10; xviii. 4). Hence it was literally true (Acts xv. 21) that in that period "Moses had in every city them that preached him, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath day."

The Synagogue and the Gospel

The result has been well stated in a work, in which "the Ways of God" were thoughtfully and devoutly traced. "After the return from Babylon zeal for the Law multiplied the synagogues where it was publicly read. Truth was thus more widely diffused among themselves; while those who never returned to Palestine, or emigrated and spread through the Roman empire, became imperfect centres of religious light to the Gentiles among whom they sojourned. Truths which, by long familiarity, were losing their power over the Jews themselves, came with a startling novelty to these idolatrous heathen. Many were aroused from the dreams of fatalism, or sensual polytheism, and learned to own once more the dominion of the God of heaven, the Supreme Governor and Judge of all mankind. The number of proselytes gradually

increased and their piety seems often to have been more simple, earnest, and genuine, than that of the Jewish believers themselves. It was over one of these that the Son of God himself pronounced those words of emphatic praise, 'Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.'"[1]

The Synagogue and Christian Institutions

And if our thoughts, on visiting one of these places of Jewish worship, are carried backwards and upwards into all the previous annals of Judaism, with equal force are they carried forwards down all the stream of Christian history. If the synagogues were a preparation, in one sense, for the Gospel, by diffusing the knowledge of the true God in the minds of the heathen, so were they a preparation, in another sense, by establishing the precedents for many details of Christian institutions and Christian worship. The public reading of the Old Testament, to which the reading of the New Testament (Col. iv. 16; 1 Thess. v. 27) was gradually added—the orderly cycle of lessons (Luke iv. 17; Acts xiii. 15)—the exposition and exhortation—the devotional use of the Psalms—the course of familiar prayers—the simple chants—the loud "Amen" of the congregation (1 Cor. xiv. 16)—the habit of associating almsgiving with worship (1 Cor. xvi. 2)—the various ministerial

[1] Birks, *The Ways of God*, p. 31

functions, whether they were those of "the ruler of the synagogue" (Mark v. 22) or the mere routine of the subordinate official (Luke iv. 20)—in all this we have, as it were, the type and pattern, the germ and rudiments, of much that is familiar to us in our collective Christian life. And if in some things there are contrasts—as, for instance, in praying with the head uncovered (1 Cor. xi. 4), whereas, in the Jewish worship, it has for ages been customary for the men to wear the "tallith" or veil—this only serves to bring out more clearly into view the fact that Hebrew devotions have passed by an easy and continuous process into the Christian, and that the annals of God's people, before and since the Saviour's death and resurrection, are two parts of one history.

The Synagogue and Divine Dispensations for the Future

In contemplating the synagogue-worship, we are really in contact with all the Divine dispensations. And surely such an association may well carry our thoughts still more remotely forward into the indefinite future, to the time when the separated stream of Jewish history will be finally merged in the full glory of the Christian, though, till prophecy is fulfilled, our minds must be dark and dim, and opinions will necessarily differ as to the details and the mode of that great consummation. Thus, in considering the visit of the Apostle of the Gentiles to the synagogue at Antioch in

Pisidia (Acts xiii. 14), we are viewing his mission in its connexion with the whole of the Divine course of history: and we desire to keep this thought in mind through the remarks which follow. A very few sentences will bring up to this point the succession of events in which he had been concerned since the time when we left him—converted to God, and diligently giving proofs of his conversion—in the city of Damascus.

Saul at Jerusalem

The next place where we see Saul is Jerusalem (Acts ix. 26; Gal. i. 18). There he "assayed to join himself to the disciples," but they naturally doubted him and dreaded him; when Barnabas did the truest part of a friend, in removing suspicions, and binding together in love those who believed in the same Saviour. But opposition soon came from without, from those very "Grecians," or Hellenistic Jews, with whom Saul himself had once co-operated against Stephen. Unable to refute the new convert to Stephen's faith, "they went about to slay him; which, when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus (Acts ix. 30).

Saul at Tarsus

We have next, therefore, to imagine him in his native city, which he had left as a young and bigoted Jew, and now revisited as a mature and settled Christian. It is quite certain that he was not inactive in Cilicia,

though nothing is recorded of his labours; but presently a new field for his exertions was spread freely before him. The proclamation of the Gospel at Antioch, the great metropolis of Northern Syria, had been followed by large and sudden success (Acts xi. 20, 21). Barnabas was sent to promote and regulate this growing work; and feeling the need of aid, he went to Tarsus "to seek Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch." And here it was, in connexion with the labours of these two missionaries, that the name of "Christian," at first given as a term of reproach (Acts xi. 26; xxvi. 28; 1 Pet. iv. 16), but long since the most glorious title in the world, was first given to the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth.

Saul and Barnabas set apart

After this residence in "the regions of Syria and Cilicia" (Gal. i. 21), this Antioch became the starting point of wider missionary journeys; and Barnabas and Saul were set apart with solemn prayer and fasting (Acts xiii. 2, 3), and sent forth to begin to convert the world. Accompanied by "John, whose surname was Mark" (Acts xiii. 5; xv. 37), they sailed first to Cyprus, the native land of Barnabas, and traversed the island from Salamis on the east to Paphos on the west. From Paphos they sailed across to the main land, and "came to Perga in Pamphylia." Here Mark,

losing heart at the prospect of dangers and difficulties, forsook his companions, and returned to Jerusalem.

The Arrival at Antioch in Pisidia

Meanwhile Barnabas and Saul proceeded across the mountains, amid "perils of robbers" and "perils of rivers" (2 Cor. xi. 26)—for risks of both kinds abounded in the range of Taurus—and arrived at another Antioch, a considerable city in Pisidia, on an important line of road, and containing a large and influential body of Jewish residents. The existence of a synagogue here, the opportunity of acting through it upon a large population, and the power of communicating easily with other cities, were probably the determining causes which led the steps of the Apostles to this place.

The Address in the Synagogue

Now, on proceeding to examine St Paul's address in this synagogue, and bearing in mind the observations made above, we are struck at once by the fact that its method is historical. In this respect it was strictly in harmony with Stephen's address at Jerusalem; and not only so, but in harmony with much earlier precedents, such as the solemn enumerations of past events on the return from Captivity (Neh. ix.), or in the Psalms (Ps. lxxviii.), or by Joshua (Josh. xxiv.), or by Moses (Deut. i., ii., iii.). Again and again, in all parts of their history, were the chosen people

reminded of their responsible part in a great progressive scheme, in which God's hand had been made visible. This harmony of the Divine messages is a point to be reverently observed in connexion with that continuous sequence of Jewish story, which has been dwelt on above. But we are called on to note, moreover, certain specific characteristics of this important address.

Its History of the Hebrews

And first, it may be remarked, that the history of the chosen people is so presented in this address, as to bring out strongly to view their weakness and unworthiness and sin on the one hand, and God's free grace and patience and mercy on the other. It is not simply an enumeration of facts, with which we have to do (though even by enumerating bare facts of history Paul would have conciliated and arrested his audience), but the mode in which these facts are enumerated, is such as to give prominence to great principles essential to his argument. It was God who chose "the fathers" of the Jewish people; it was He who "raised them up" when they dwelt as "strangers" in Egypt; His "high arm" that brought them out from thence; He that bore them in the wilderness, "even as a nurse beareth her child"; for such, we believe, to be the true meaning of what St Paul said, in harmony with, and in allusion to, the expression in Deuteronomy (Deut. i. 31). It was God who "gave" them the land,

God who "gave" them the judges for a long series of years, "until Samuel the prophet." And now, by the mention of this name he enters at once on the period of Saul and David.

The mode in which Saul is mentioned is remarkable. The tribe of Benjamin is specified, and the sin of the first king of Israel is very lightly touched. Are we to see here a trace of the preacher's hereditary feeling and (so to speak) innocent pride in the glory of his ancestry? Or is the allusion made because of the smallness of the tribe to which royalty first came, and is it an illustration of that unmerited choice which raised "little Benjamin" (Ps. lxviii. 27) to the dignity of a "ruler"?

Its Mention of Saul

We may leave this question unanswered, and proceed to notice what is said of David. Here the Apostle, having rapidly passed along a few stepping-stones of history, has reached his main point, the typical character of David, and the raising up of Jesus "from the seed" of his royal ancestor. As to this method of preaching, some have conjectured (on grounds that are not unreasonable) that St Paul obtained a natural occasion for it from the circumstance that the lessons for the day in the course of synagogue-worship were the first chapter of Deuteronomy and the first chapter of Isaiah. This would have been a happy juxtaposition, and

—And of David

would have furnished an admirable starting-point. Whatever may have been the fact in regard to this point of detail, the method of the discourse was most skilfully adapted to bring the thoughts of his audience rapidly and easily along the right line of thought to the main subject of his inspired preaching.

Its Relation to the Gospels

Another characteristic of this address—and one which is more important than at first sight appears, from its bearing on the inner harmony and unity of Scripture—is the mode in which it abuts on the narrative in the Gospels. In this respect it is quite contrasted with all the other discourses of St Paul. But in this very quality it fits its occasion, as they by their own peculiarities fit their occasions. Nowhere else does he mention Galilee; but the mention of it here is in harmony with the Galilean associations of the greater part of our Lord's ministry, and with the references to this fact in the earlier part of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts i. 11; ii. 7; ix. 31; x. 37). The mention of Pilate, too, comes in naturally here, while we feel it would not be so natural in any other of the recorded speeches of St Paul. We observe, moreover, that when he refers to those who had been personally present with Christ, and were thus in a peculiar sense His "witnesses," he excludes himself and Barnabas.

ALLUSION TO JOHN THE BAPTIST

Its Allusion to John the Baptist

Nor ought the prominent reference to John the Baptist to be disregarded. In no part of any of St Paul's Epistles do we find any allusion to the Forerunner of Christ; but none of them require it. Here, in first presenting the Gospel to the Jews, it is most natural that this appointed and predicted preparation should be urged on their attention; just as it is most natural that we should find traces of the Baptist's influence in the case of Apollos (Acts xviii. 25), and of those few scattered disciples at Ephesus (Acts xix. 3, 4), and that afterwards the notices of this subject should fade away.

Such observations as these may appear to some readers needlessly minute, but they are by no means unimportant in an age when there is a tendency to disintegrate Scripture, and to overlook or deny the coherency of its several portions.

Its relation to the Old Testament

And if this minute, yet, so to speak, unconscious connexion subsists between this speech and the Gospel narratives, so are we called to observe the links which bind it closely, and quite in St Paul's manner, with the earlier Scriptures. The application of the Old Testament is made here with the facility of a master hand, and just after that method of quotations and half quotations, interwoven in the context, which we observe to be characteristic of his Epistles. When he mentions David, he com-

bines in one easy sentence a passage from the Psalms (Ps. lxxxix. 21), and a passage from the Books of Samuel (1 Sam. xiii. 14). When the resurrection of David's Son is set before the audience as a predicted and accomplished fact, an extract from Isaiah (Isa. lv. 3) is brought into emphatic juxtaposition with extracts from two other Psalms (Ps. ii. 7; xvi. 10). When John the Baptist is introduced, it is partly in the words of Malachi (Mal. iii. 1; Matt. xi. 10), a persuasive fact which would at once attract the attention of the Jews who listened in the synagogue, though it might easily escape the notice of the English reader, or even the careless reader of the Greek. Then at the close there is a solemn denunciation from Habakkuk (Hab. i. 5), just as at the end of the Acts (Acts xxviii. 25-28) we find a warning from a prophet addressed to the unbelieving Jews at Rome. Nor ought we to leave unnoticed the further fact, that here at Antioch in Pisidia, when the Jews finally did, through unbelief, reject their opportunity, and the apostles did turn to the Gentiles, the sentence passed upon the former is taken from the words of Isaiah (Is. xlix. 6).

St Paul's Tact and Judgment

Nor should we be wasting time if we were to trace in this sermon, as we certainly can, some other features of the Apostle Paul. There is his characteristic tact

and judgment in keeping in view the two elements, the Jews and the Proselytes, of which his audience was composed. Not only in the direct appeal to both at the opening of the speech—"Men of Israel, and ye that fear God" (Acts xiii. 16), and in the middle part of it, "Children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God" (Acts xiii. 26)—but in the phrase, "The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers" (Acts xiii. 17), there is evident a distinct recollection of the presence of those Gentiles and half-Gentiles who through this opportunity were to be brought to the knowledge of Christ.

St Paul's Style

There is again something of the lively and pointed style, with abrupt and sudden turns, which is familiar to us in the Epistle to the Galatians and the Second Epistle to the Corinthians; there is the affectionate manner of address (Acts xiii. 26, 38), in which it is evident that his whole heart goes with his words; there is even the favourite image of the race-course (Acts xiii. 25), which is applied here to the career of John the Baptist, as it is applied elsewhere to his own career (Acts xx. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 7), and to the life-struggle of every Christian (1 Cor. ix. 24).

We may even go a little deeper than this, and trace that forbearance and conciliatory manner, with which this Apostle always knew so well

how to present a truth which at first sight was likely to give offence. For we observe that in speaking of the death of Christ, he lays more stress on "the grave" than on the cross. He makes the best of the crime of the Jews in crucifying Him, by saying that they did this in ignorance ("because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets": Acts xiii. 27); he lays a portion of the blame on the Roman governor, who gave the command; and twice (Acts xiii. 27, 29) he notes that in this ignorant and guilty deed, the predictions of the prophets were fulfilled. Not that any truth was concealed, or that there was any softening of the fearful responsibility under which men hear the Gospel.

St Paul's Conciliatory Manner

For finally we have (Acts xiii. 32, 38) that direct personal appeal to the individual conscience, which is never absent from the teaching of St Paul. Attention is called, not so much to the crime of other Jews in rejecting Christ, as to the opportunity the hearers have of receiving Him. That "word of salvation" which had been refused at Jerusalem, they now in the Pisidian Antioch had the free power of accepting. Thus all is brought to bear on the eternal interests of the soul: and this leads us to the last characteristic of the address which demands our consideration.

St Paul's Appeal to the Conscience

One sentence in this speech (Acts xiii. 39) is a condensed summary of the whole of St Paul's teaching on the subject of Justification.[1] Not only is the comforting truth declared, that "by this man" the "full forgiveness of sins" is proclaimed; but three other truths are distinctly enunciated; first, that this blessing comes through "believing"; next, that man cannot possibly be "justified" by the law; and lastly, that the blessing is freely offered without distinction to "all," whether Jew or Gentile. With this distinctive phraseology we must combine what is said just afterwards (Acts xiii. 43), concerning the exhortation to continue "in the grace of God." It is the first time that this exact expression is used in the New Testament; and it is used by St Paul. It evidently denotes that grace of reconciliation and redemption, which henceforth in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts xiv. 3; xv. 11), and everywhere in his Epistles, forms the burden of his message to mankind.

St Paul on Justification

It is important to remember that we have in this address only the outline of the apostolic teaching at this place. The whole of the transactions at Antioch in Pisidia are not related to us, but only those parts which are most important for our

The Address a Doctrinal Summary

[1] Hannah's *Bampton Lectures for* 1863, pp. 216, 356.

instruction and for the elucidation of great principles. This sermon was a missionary and introductory discourse, followed by domestic instruction in detail, just as sermons in our day ought to be followed by pastoral work and catechetical teaching. Even before the meeting in the synagogue it is probable that much of the Apostle's doctrine was known through discussions and conversations on the previous days; and after the meeting we are distinctly told of eager listeners and of systematic continued efforts to make the Gospel completely known.

Its Results

On the dispersing of the first congregation, we are informed (Acts xiii. 43), that many members of it attached themselves anxiously to the apostles, and followed them with an earnest request for more instruction. The invitation indeed came from the Gentiles (Acts xiii. 42); but some at least of the Jews shared their feelings. On the next Sabbath (Acts xiii. 44) a vast crowd assembled in and around the synagogue.

Jewish Opposition

But now a change passed over the mind of the Jews. So long as religious knowledge came through them to the Gentiles, so long as the Gentiles were simply invited to become Jews and to share their privileges, this could be tolerated; but when the heathen were invited to a direct reception of religious truth on

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equal terms with themselves, this was more than they could bear. The grudging spirit was manifested which is well illustrated in the "elder brother" of the prodigal in the parable. They began now openly to oppose the missionaries, and to speak "against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming." (Alas! he too had once contradicted and "blasphemed.")

This forced the Apostles to turn to the Gentiles. It was "necessary" indeed (Acts i. 8; iii. 20; Rom. i. 16), that the word of God should "first have been spoken" to the Jews; but when they rejected it, the turn of the Gentiles was come, and they received it with welcome and joy.

The turning to the Gentiles

And now the Jews, not content with repelling the truth, and separating its preachers from the synagogue, set on foot an open persecution, making use of the influence of women (Acts xiii. 50), who are always either the best or the worst, and who, while they are the most effectual promoters of true religion, are also its most powerful and dangerous enemies. For such a case explicit instruction had been given by our Saviour Himself (Matt. x. 14, 15). Paul and Barnabas "shook the dust from their feet," and withdrew. If the door was closed here, it might be open elsewhere. By withdrawing, too, they did not give

The Consequent Persecution

up the cause, but only changed the field of operation.

The Triumph of the Gospel

Nor was their success inconsiderable even at Antioch in Pisidia. From what is said (Acts xiii. 49) of "the region" round about, it is evident that this city was a centre from which the truth of Christ radiated widely. And especially we are called on to observe, not merely the numbers of the converts, but their joyous and confident spirit. When the Gentiles heard the good tidings, "they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord" (Acts xiii. 48); and when Paul with Barnabas was compelled to leave them, "the disciples" instead of desponding, "were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost" (Acts xiii. 52).

The Scene Repeated

This was a scene which was often re-enacted, and with the same results, St Paul had already had experience of rejection by the Jews at Damascus (Acts ix. 23), and at Jerusalem (Acts ix. 29); and again and again, in later years, he was forced by their resistance to "turn to the Gentiles"—as at Corinth (Acts xviii. 6)—at Ephesus (Acts xix. 9)—and in Rome (Acts xxviii. 28). At this very time, immediately after leaving the Pisidian Antioch, the same transactions were repeated in the very next city. They had travelled eastwards to Iconium (Acts xiii. 51; xiv. 1); there they

proceeded instantly with the same work, and according to the same method, proclaiming Christ first in the synagogue. The result was in harmony with the Saviour's solemn words to the Jews: "Ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt. xxiii. 13). God's people refused God's truth, and hindered others. Jews became the ringleaders (Acts xiv. 2) in a violent party movement, and, notwithstanding the miracles (Acts xiv. 3) which were worked in attestation of the Gospel, they went so far as to persuade many of the Gentiles to combine with them in an effort to stone the Apostles (Acts xiv. 5). Jews appear throughout this narrative as the moving cause of all the opposition. But their crime was the gain of the Gentiles. The Apostles travelled on, eastwards still, into a rude and primitive district, inhabited almost entirely by an ignorant and heathen population.

The Dispersion Related to Christianity

Without following the apostolic missionaries into that district for the present, we conclude by reverting to the general thought with which these remarks began. Our wish has been (in harmony with the occasion) to keep the great subject of historical Judaism clearly before the mind, and to point out some of its bearings on the evidences of our holy religion. We have seen the vast import-

ance of the dispersion of the Jews among the heathen, in reference to the preparation thus secured for the spread of Christianity. Now, since the firm establishment of Christianity, we have to view this dispersion as an evidence in another way. It was prophesied again and again, in the most emphatic language, that the Jews should be scattered. "The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other" (Deut. xxviii. 64). "Among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest" (Deut. xxviii. 65). "I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth" (Jer. xv. 4). And very literally and universally has this been fulfilled. Most truly has it been said, that "dispersion has been the very habit under which they have existed." Never was any scattering so "devious," yet so "perpetual."[1]

—A Preparation and a Testimony

And not only must we attend in this case to the fact that a certain destiny has been foretold and accomplished, but the diffusion of the Jews has been the diffusion of that which is essentially bound up with Christianity. Thus if their dispersion was a preparation before, it is a testimony now. Not only is it "a reproach, and a taunt, and an astonishment" (Ezek. v. 15), but also "an instruction" to the nations which are around. By this wide and lasting dispersion one

[1] Davison, *Discourses on Prophecy*, pp. 411, 424.

very special purpose of God's providence has been promoted, and an evidence supplied which the fortunes of no other people could possibly have afforded. In the case of another nation such a fate might have been the fulfilment of prophecy, but in the case of the Jews we have more than this. "Their dispersion is like a dissemination of a general evidence of Revealed Religion. Wherever they have been seen, they have pressed upon men's notice the authentic history of their covenant, their law, and their prophets. They have been a living proof of one-half of Revealed Religion."

IV

THE GOSPEL AND HEATHENISM —LYSTRA

Contrasted Appeals of St Paul—The Apostles at Lycaonia—The Local Worship—Ovid's Story—The Miracle at Lystra—St Paul's Pre-eminence—Popular Amazement—Popular Adoration—St Paul's Address—His Versatile Sympathy—The Superstition of the People—The Fickleness of the People—Distrust fostered—The Result: Persecution—Once Stoned: Once Deified—But the End not yet—St Paul and Timothy—Defeated yet Victorious—Another Visit.

Contrasted Appeals of St Paul

Two scenes have been selected from St Paul's first missionary journey, as samples of the whole. The last scene was as Jewish as it is possible to conceive: that which is now before us is altogether Heathen. There the history of the chosen people of old formed the starting-point of the Apostle's argument: here his appeal is to natural conscience and the experience of God's goodness in the processes of the physical world. There the quotations which gave life to the address were from the Psalms of David and the Prophecies of Isaiah: here our best illustrations would be derived from the poetry of Ovid.

This rapid alternation exemplifies the varied experience of St Paul, and his manifold difficulties in building up a universal church from the most incongruous materials. The middle wall of partition was broken down (Eph. ii. 14). There was no longer "Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free" (Col. iii. 11). The task, however, of accomplishing for all coming time what was involved in this mighty truth, could only be effected through a life of toil, struggle, and martyrdom. "Perils by his own countrymen" (2 Cor. xi. 26) were, on this first missionary journey, quickly succeeded by "perils by the heathen"; and the same experience was repeated, again and again, under varied circumstances, through his long and suffering career.

The Apostles at Lycaonia

Lycaonia (Acts xiv. 6, 11) was a wild district which lay eastwards from that city of Iconium, where, as we have seen, the events of Antioch in Pisidia were reiterated. Two of the characteristics of the population are brought to view by the sacred narrative in their local worship (Acts xiv. 13) and their local dialect (Acts xiv. 11). We need not enter into any minute inquiries concerning the precise nature of this dialect. The main point is, that it sets the inhabitants before us as comparatively rude and unsophisticated, and as peculiarly liable to religious

excitement. Our best commentary on such a passage, is to imagine what the Highlanders were in Scotland, or the Bretons in France, two centuries ago.

The Local Worship

The local worship of Lycaonia admits of a more exact illustration. That phrase which has been referred to — "Jupiter, which was before their city"—shows that this god was the patron divinity of the place, just as "Diana" was of another city, which will come prominently before us at a later period (Acts xix. 23-41). And there would be at Lystra a venerated temple and statue of Jupiter, just as there were of "the great goddess" at Ephesus. Jupiter was conceived as the "father of gods and men," and it was believed that he sometimes visited the earth. And on such occasions his frequent companion was Mercury, the messenger of the gods, and himself the god of eloquence.

Ovid's Story

But now we have to notice a specific circumstance which connects those two divinities with the district of Lycaonia. Allusion has been made to Ovid. One of the most charming of his poems describes a visit of Jupiter and Mercury to the rude and simple peasants of this very region.[1] An old story like this, if once current among the peasantry, would not be likely soon to be forgotten. It would be told on winter nights, would be

[1] Ovid, *Metam.* viii. 611.

familiar to the children, and made the subject of popular songs and ballads. All this, too, would be visibly associated with the temple and statue of Jupiter "before the city." At the time of festivals, the minds of old and young would be full of the tradition; and for aught we know a festival of the patron divinity might be going on at Lystra at the very moment of which we are writing.

The Miracle at Lystra

Into this district, and into the midst of this population, the missionaries came after their expulsion from Iconium. They proceeded immediately with their work; and the first event which is recorded was exactly of such a character as to excite the popular feeling and enthusiasm to the utmost. The sudden healing of a man lame from his birth was an unheard-of event; and we cannot wonder that these poor heathens should have rushed to the conclusion that the two divinities of fable had visited them again. Paul was the speaker to whom the cripple had been listening (Acts xiv. 9).

St Paul's Pre-eminence

It is worth while to notice carefully how clearly he had now become the more prominent of the two apostles. At first it seemed (Acts xii. 25; xiii. 2) as if Barnabas was to have the first place; but already in Cyprus (Acts xiii. 9) and on crossing to the mainland (Acts xiii. 13), we see "Saul, who also is Paul," taking the lead in the missionary work. Thus it was

natural for the Lystrians, seeing that he was the organ of communication from heaven to mortal men, to call him Mercury. It obviously followed that his companion was Jupiter himself. It might be too that Barnabas was older, and that there was more of dignity in his form and features. Of St Paul we know certainly (2 Cor. x. 1, 10) that at least his personal appearance was not majestic. Nor is it unreasonable to conclude, when we read of Barnabas being "a good man" (Acts xi. 24), of his generosity to Paul on a critical occasion (Acts ix. 27), and of his being named "the Son of Consolation" (Acts iv. 36), that there was in his aspect something of that noble beneficence which would naturally be attributed to the father of gods and men.

Popular Amazement

Without, however, adding anything from our own imagination, we see how natural it was that the Lystrians should rush together, and with one voice give expression to their feelings of wonder and gratitude; and that these feelings should find their utterance in the native hereditary dialect, which to every people is the instantaneous language of emotion. "When the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter, and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker."

ST. PAUL AT LYSTRA.
(Acts xiv, 13.)

POPULAR ADORATION

The next step was to proceed, without a moment's delay, to adoration and sacrifice. "The priest of Jupiter" was summoned to his duty. Victims were brought, duly decorated with "garlands"; and the votive procession, surrounded by an eager multitude, approached "the gates" of the house where the missionaries were resting or teaching.

Popular Adoration

But now they saw the full import of the excitement of the multitude, which at first they could not possibly understand from their ignorance of the Lycaonian language. They sprang out in vehement horror, "rent their clothes," and addressed the people. Very different from Agrippa (Acts xii. 22, 23), who complacently allowed himself to be deified, and perished under a righteous judgment, — shrinking, on the contrary, like Peter (Acts x. 26), from any approach to divine honours, "for that they also were men,"—and rejecting them with even a more abrupt indignation than Peter, in proportion as the case was more urgent and the excitement greater,—they rushed out among the people, exclaiming that (however they might be the bearers of a divine message) they were only men with all the common infirmities of mankind. Suffering and persecution they can take patiently, and even thankfully, but to see the name of God dishonoured, this they cannot bear.

St Paul's Address

Of the address which is recorded here as delivered at Lystra, it may be remarked, as of that which was given at Antioch in Pisidia, that it exactly (and most naturally and easily) fits its occasion. In the first place it is rapid, condensed, and short, with a pointed reference to a few great principles, whereas the former was more prolonged, deliberate, and argumentative. But again, as has been observed above, the whole basis and groundwork is different. It is an appeal, not to ancient authoritative writings, which the Gentiles did not possess, not to articulate promises and prophecies and threatenings, but to common experience, to the phenomena of creation, and to the law of conscience written on the heart. "The invisible things of God" may really, though obscurely, be "understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. i. 20): and the poor Lystrians themselves might have risen from the contemplation of "the heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein" (Acts xiv. 15), to some apprehension of "the Living God."

His Versatile Sympathy

Comparing, then, this address with that which was delivered at Antioch in Pisidia we have an opportunity of observing that consummate divinely-guided wisdom and judgment, by which the Apostle became "all things to all men" (1 Cor. ix. 22). And not only so; but

on close consideration, we remark also that versatile sympathy, so to speak, with which he placed his heart in direct and warm contact with the hearts of those whom he addressed. Just as in speaking in the synagogue he showed that deep Jewish feeling which united him in the closest bonds with all of the Hebrew race, wherever they might be found; so here, without effort, in the kindly and affectionate mention of the "rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts xiv. 17), he puts himself on the same level with the Lycaonian Gentiles. In this reference to human wants and human enjoyments, St Paul spoke a language which is common to all mankind, and which can, without difficulty, be made to tell of the "Universal Father" who cares for all our needs, and "giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. vi. 17).

The Superstition of the People

Yet with all this adaptation and sympathy, we read that Paul was "hardly" able to restrain the people from offering sacrifice to himself and Barnabas. The hereditary superstition, which had been so suddenly kindled into a flame, did not easily subside. The old tradition, like the old dialect, had a strong hold on those simple and ignorant minds. Doubtless this implies a low condition, both intellectually and morally. But this is far from the worst state of mind with which Christianity had to deal in the

experience of St Paul. It is favourably contrasted alike with the proud self-complacency and bitter persecuting spirit of the Pharisee at Jerusalem, or with the cold and frivolous unbelief of the philosopher at Athens, or with the devotion to material interests which we see among the worshippers of Diana at Ephesus. "This people who knoweth not the law are cursed" (John vii. 49), or "What will this babbler say?" (Acts xvii. 18), or "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth" (Acts xix. 25)—in these sentences we have imbedded a far worse hostility to the Gospel than in the eager cry of the Lystrian crowd: "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men" (Acts xiv. 11). Among this rude people of Lycaonia the old religious feelings lingered and were strong. In a sceptical age they still believed in a power superior to that of man. They were more artless and generous than the pedants of great cities. They had at least that simple superstition which keeps men from despair; and they were nearer God than those whom philosophical theories hindered from entertaining the very thought of an incarnation.

The Fickleness of the People

Such a state of mind, however, resting as it does on feeling rather than on judgment is peculiarly liable to sudden changes. And such a change took place at Lystra. But yet when we read the narrative, all our indignation is

transferred from the fickle Lycaonians to the malignant and implacable Jews, who disturbed the apostolic work just when it was beginning to succeed, and turned the excitable minds of these poor heathens from wondering admiration to suspicion and rage.

These Jews, not content with having driven the missionaries from the neighbourhood of their synagogues, and hearing with vexation of their success elsewhere, pursued them into this remote district. Some of them came even from Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiv. 19). They had intended at Iconium to stone them (Acts xiv. 5), and at Lystra they succeeded. They found the minds of the inhabitants in a state of much excitement; and it is not difficult to conjecture the arguments by which they persuaded them, if not actively to co-operate in the crime, at least to sanction and approve it.

Distrust fostered

The seeds of distrust are easily sown in ignorant minds; and in such a case may be expected very soon to issue in a harvest of violence and injustice. As to the miracle worked at Lystra, it would be an obvious course to say that it had been effected, not by Divine goodness, but by the malignant agency of evil spirits. The thought of magic in that day presented no difficulty either to Jews or Gentiles. It would be easy to suggest further that these

men, instead of having the benignant attributes of Jupiter and Mercury, were really the enemies of all national religions. It could be asserted truly that much disturbance and disorder had followed their visits to Antioch and Iconium; and by the mixing of some slander with the truth, the desired persuasion would readily be accomplished.

The Result: Persecution

We cannot wonder at the result. "From garlands to stones," the step is indeed considerable; but it is a step which has often been taken very positively and suddenly. The recoil against idols, if it occurs at all, is usually vehement; and a mob knows no limits to its displeasure, if it believes itself betrayed and deceived. It would be easy to quote examples. The death of Captain Cook has been adduced as an apt illustration of what happened to St Paul. The adoration paid to our countryman at Owyhee and on board the "Resolution"—the victims, the chanted prayers, the procession, the ornaments—do certainly furnish (allowing for a more grotesque heathenism among the South Sea Islanders than on the confines of Greek art and taste) a very close parallel to what was experienced by St Paul—as do the sudden revulsion of feeling, the violent attack, and the cruel death on the very place where the adoration had been paid.[1] This

[1] *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (1785), vol. iii. See p. 5 for the worship of Captain Cook, and p. 46 for his death.

is said, not to cast a shade on the memory of one of our great discoverers (for it may be hoped that the strong expressions on the subject in one of Cowper's letters were written under a mistake, and that a juster view is that of Cowper's biographer,[1] who himself personally knew Captain Cook, and regarded it as impossible for "that humane and truly Christian navigator" to have connived at idolatry offered to himself), but it is brought forward simply as a practical commentary on this startling passage in the great Apostle's life. Little did he suppose, when he stood by the dead body of Stephen outside the walls of Jerusalem, that he himself should one day be stoned, and that his own body would lie insensible in the outskirts of a heathen town, close behind the familiar mountains of his native Cilicia.

"Once I was stoned," is his own expression (2 Cor. xi. 25) in a letter written some years afterwards. He might have said also, "Once I was deified"; and striking indeed it is that the deification and the stoning should have occurred at the very same place. Remarks have been made above on the lesson which it furnishes in regard to the fickleness of a mob, and the uncertainty and unsteadiness of

Once Stoned: Once Deified

[1] Hayley's *Life of Cowper* (1806), vol. ii. pp. 251, 253.

religious excitement. But this event contains also a lesson for ourselves individually. We are all apt to stone our gods. When we have trusted with an eager and foolish admiration, and find ourselves deluded, there often occurs a sudden and violent recoil. So long as our confidence is not truly and calmly Christian, there is always danger of disappointment and change.

But the End not Yet

But St Paul was not yet to die. For himself, indeed, it would have been "far better to depart and to be with Christ"; but for all future generations and for us it was "more needful" that he should abide in the flesh (Phil. i. 23, 24). Many years of suffering and service were before him; and much was to be done, and spoken, and written, before he was to go to his reward. Lystra, too, he was to see again, not merely in retracing the steps of the present journey, when the Church which had been formed was to be systematically organised (Acts xiv. 23); but also on a second journey, when the disciples were to be revisited and strengthened (Acts xv. 36, 41; xvi. 1); and probably on a third (Acts xviii. 22, 23), when his career of travel had taken a wider range, and some of those Epistles had been written which he has left as a perpetual legacy to the Christian world. It is interesting and useful to remember how much was involved in the re-

storation of the apparently lifeless form of this Apostle, which the few disciples at Lystra surrounded with so much solicitude (Acts xiv. 20), when the waves of the angry crowd had ebbed away.

St Paul and Timothy

In that group of anxious friends we cannot well doubt that one young "disciple" was present, who afterwards became one of the closest and dearest companions of St Paul. That Timothy was converted by the Apostle's direct instrumentality is evident, since he calls him (1 Tim. i. 2) his "own son in the faith." That he was converted before St Paul's second visit to Lystra is also evident, since on that visit he is already termed "a disciple" (Acts xvi. 1). Thus his first reception of Christianity is distinctly connected with the time of the Apostle's teaching, persecution, and suffering at Lystra. And his presence as an eye-witness, and an eye-witness full of sympathy, is implied in a most affecting passage written long afterwards in the Apostle's latest letter: "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me" (2 Tim. iii. 10, 11): where it is not by any means useless to observe, that the places are enumerated in the

exact succession, and the exact geographical order, in which they were visited, and that Derbe (Acts xiv. 20; xvi. 1), where no persecution took place, is omitted from the enumeration.

This remark is made merely for the sake of inviting attention to the minute yet unartificial harmony which subsists among different parts of Scripture. Another remark, of a more practical and devotional kind, may well be suggested also. How striking it is that the same journey from Perga to Derbe, which began with the loss of a companion and fellow-missionary, should have ended in the raising up of another companion, still closer and more useful! The providence of God was in this the more marked in proportion as the number of Jews in Lystra was small. Other cities with a far greater population produced no such missionary as Timotheus. God works by secret methods, and often makes up very suddenly and unexpectedly for the trials and sufferings He sees it wise to permit.

Defeated yet Victorious

Thus, though these soldiers of the Cross were, in one sense, defeated at Lystra, they really achieved there a solid victory, the value of which it required many years to reveal. They "fled" indeed to Derbe, another small town of the same neighbourhood. Yet was this not properly a flight, but rather a retreat with weapons in their hands, a retreat, too,

in obedience to a general order given by their Captain (Matt. x. 23), and with a ready desire to return on their steps, so soon as an opportunity should be granted.

And they did return, visiting the same places deliberately, one by one, in the inverse order, namely (Acts xiv. 21), "Lystra, then Iconium, then Antioch." The peril must have been great; but they were protected by Him who, when a man's ways are pleasing in His sight, can "make even his foes to be at peace with him" (Prov. xvi. 7), and who, in the worst of times, can "still the enemy and the avenger" (Ps. viii. 2).

Another Visit

This return, too, was remarkable for something more than the mere courageous facing of danger. They felt, like Moses on the plains of Moab (Deut. xxxii. 46, 47), that they were building for the future. How different was the course of their proceeding from anything akin either to fanaticism or imposture! They told the disciples that the entrance into the kingdom of God lay "through much tribulation." Yet they calmly provided for the settled organisation and permanent existence of the communities which they had founded, ordaining elders "in every church," with the same solemn prayer and fasting (Acts xiv. 23) which had attended the commencement of their

own mission. So they returned by Perga and Attalia to the Syrian Antioch, the point of their departure; and the first systematic Missionary expedition of the Church of Christ came to its conclusion.

V

THE ROMAN EMPIRE—PHILIPPI

Preparation for the Gospel: along Three Lines—Preparation through Organisation of the Roman Empire—Between the First and Second Missionary Journeys—The Second Journey—The Roman Provinces visited—Commerce and the Apostolic Journeys: by Sea: by Land—At Philippi: the Roman "Colonies"—Roman Magistrates—Roman Law—Roman Citizenship—Corruption of the Empire—Combination of Unbelief and Superstition—Spiritual Manifestations—Superstition in Action—Demoniac Possession—Evil Powers aroused: in Antagonism to the Gospel: and in Defence of Self-interest—St Paul's Position—Hindered and Helped—Trained for Humility and Confidence.

Preparation for the Gospel

In considering the early progress of the Gospel in the world, and estimating the evidence for the truth of the Religion implied in this very progress, there are two distinct sides of the subject carefully to be borne in mind. On the one hand, there were difficulties to be overcome; on the other hand, facilities were previously provided. On the one hand, the advance of Christianity was a triumph of grace; on the other hand, it was the supply of wants deeply felt by man. On the one hand, it was promoted by Divinely-wrought miracles,—and indeed it is difficult to see how without miracles

the new Religion could have obtained the requisite attention;—on the other hand, provision had been made for this progress in manifold ways by Divine prearrangements.

—Along Three Lines

One such providential preparation has already been noticed in the widespread dispersion of the Jews. Another is to be found in the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, taken in connexion with the diffusion of the Greek language over the whole of the Levant. A third, which will be the principal subject of our present remarks, is the political organisation of the Roman empire, with its provinces and active trade, its military roads and military colonies, its systematic law, and the defined rights of its privileged citizens.

Preparation through Organisation of the Roman Empire

Nor could any place be more suitable than Philippi for dwelling on this subject, and enumerating such details. It is very remarkable how many of the characteristics of the Roman empire come into view in connexion with the first apostolic visit to that city. We must remember two things at the outset, that St Paul was now on his second missionary journey, and that he was now in Europe. A very few remarks will suffice for the mention of the principal facts of his biography since the time when we saw him returning from his first missionary

journey to his usual starting-point, the Syrian Antioch.

Between these two journeys (Acts xv. 1-35) a most important occurrence had taken place. It was inevitable that a question should arise concerning the relation of Jewish observances to the Christian religion. It was of essential consequence for that time that it should be decided on the principles of forbearance and charity; and yet essential for all future time that the liberty and perfection of the Gospel should be asserted and secured, without even the semblance of any necessity for ceremonial additions. And thus the question was arranged, under the teaching of God's Spirit, in a great council, at which Peter and James and Paul were present. And now, this grave transaction being completed, our Apostle departed again from Antioch, —not on this journey with Barnabas, but with Silas,—to revisit the churches already founded, and to travel farther into the regions beyond (Acts xv. 36-41).

Between the First and Second Missionary Journeys

First they proceeded to Derbe and Lystra. There another companion joined them (Acts xvi. 1), the "disciple" who had learnt his first religious lessons under Lois and Eunice (2 Tim. 1-5); who had been no indifferent or callous spectator of the Apostle's sufferings in that very neighbourhood (2 Tim. iii.

The Second Journey

10, 11). From this point the three missionaries journeyed on with varying fortunes, which are not very fully recorded,—on one occasion detained by St Paul's illness (Gal. iv. 13),—at other times in perplexity concerning their route (Acts xvi. 6, 7), —till at last they were brought by Divine guidance to the shore of the Ægean sea, at the harbour of Troas. Here they were further reinforced by the companionship of St Luke (Acts xvi. 10); and at the same time they were summoned by an explicit and supernatural intimation to convey the Gospel of Christ into Europe. And so they departed for the coast of Macedonia, and arrived at Philippi.

The Roman Provinces visited

Now even in this rapid account of a very limited part of one of St Paul's journeys we have been brought into contact with several provinces of the Roman empire. Antioch was in Syria. The next province which succeeded along this line of route was Cilicia (Acts xv. 41). Then came Galatia (Acts xvi. 6); contiguous to which, on the west and the north, were Asia and Bithynia (Acts xvi. 6, 7). And finally, after a short voyage, he landed in the great European province of Macedonia (Acts xvi. 9-12). This mere enumeration calls up in the mind of the classical reader a number of recollections, connected with a long series of Roman wars, with stories of cruelty, plunder, and extortion, with the accumulating in Rome of rich spoils and works of

art, and with the consolidation of a vast system of local administrations under provincial governors, all strongly united with the metropolis of the empire. By the Christian reader all this system is felt to be closely associated with the planting and progress of the Gospel through the labours of St Paul.

Nor does the above enumeration by any means exhaust the Apostle's associations with the provincial governments. In the course of his first journey he had been engaged in a most important communication with the governor of Cyprus (Acts xiii. 4-13). At the close of his second journey he was face to face with the governor of Achaia (Acts xviii. 12). In the interval between his third journey and the voyage to Rome he had opportunities of preaching the Gospel to successive governors of Judæa (Acts xxiii. 24, 34; xxv. 1). While on that voyage itself, his intercourse with "the chief man of Malta" (Acts xxviii. 7) reminds us again of the manifold religious opportunities presented by the provincial organisation which centered in Rome.

Commerce and the Apostolic Journeys: by Sea

The mere sight of these provinces on the map and in their connexion with the Mediterranean, leads our thoughts to another point of considerable interest in reference to the spread of the Gospel. In a commercial age, the lands that in one sense

are separated by the sea, are in a truer sense united by it. The Roman provinces were arranged in orderly succession along the coasts of the various subdivisions of "the Inland Sea"; and the busy traffic of the empire from port to port afforded the opportunities which Apostles used for conveying "the unsearchable riches of Christ" from one part of the world to another. St Paul's life abounds in illustrations of this fact. Not only have we the great voyage which he accomplished (chiefly in Alexandrian ships: Acts xxvii. 6; xxviii. 11), from Cæsarea to Puteoli, but we have various earlier and subordinate voyages (in some of which he suffered shipwreck: 2 Cor. xi. 25), such as those from Seleucia to Salamis (Acts xiii. 4, 5), from Paphos to Perga (Acts xiii. 13), from Attalia to Antioch (Acts xiv. 25, 26), and that with which we are now more especially concerned (a voyage evidently prosperous and rapid: Acts xvi. 11), from Troas by Samothracia to Neapolis.

—By Land

Again, not only did the Apostle Paul travel by water, but still more extensively by land. And not only was the Roman empire provided with abundant means of communication by sea, but still more effectually and systematically were its various parts connected by the construction of long lines of military roads. Such roads could be mentioned, in Palestine and in Asia

Minor, which were traversed by St Paul's footsteps on his errand of mercy; and especially the great Appian Way, — "the Queen of Roads," as it was popularly called,—which led southwards from Rome to Puteoli, might tempt us into some descriptive details; but at the present moment we have before our minds, in connexion with Philippi, the great Eastern Road, called the Egnatian Way, which at Apollonia and Dyrrhachium (sometimes compared very aptly to Boulogne and Calais) received Italian travellers after crossing the narrow opening of the Gulf of Venice, and afforded to them easy access over the mountains of Illyricum and Macedonia, towards Thrace and the Black Sea. St Paul's steps were on the pavement of this road from the moment of his landing at Neapolis (Acts xvi. 11), nor did he leave it till his work was finished at Thessalonica (Acts xvii. 1, 10).

At Philippi: The Roman "Colonies"

But the positions of the sea-ports and the stages along the roads invite our attention to another feature of the Roman empire which has its connexion with the work of evangelisation, and receives a signal illustration in the case of Philippi. The municipal institutions and special privileges of the cities in the empire were very various, and yet very strictly regulated, and adapted with wonderful sagacity to the purpose of maintaining the Roman power. Among these cities the most important

were those which were technically named "colonies." These perhaps may most aptly be described by saying that they were miniature copies of Rome. The basis of their population was military; the Latin language was spoken there, whatever might be the language of the surrounding country; the insignia of Roman power were conspicuously displayed; and the titles of magistrates, and other official terms, were ostentatiously borrowed from the mother city on the Tiber. These honours were assigned to certain cities, either because their position was useful for controlling the neighbouring districts or because it was associated with some great recollection. In both respects Philippi had an obvious claim. Other towns, indeed, which are familiar to us in the Acts of the Apostles, were "colonies," as for instance (to mention those only which we have already had occasion to name) both the Pisidian Antioch and the sea-port of Troas. But Philippi had been the scene of a celebrated victory; and Augustus himself, for good local reasons, had given to it the colonial honours.

Roman Magistrates

St Paul's visit to the place, and his arraignment before the magistrates (whose official name in the original is thoroughly Roman), seems like a prophecy of his visit to Rome, of his standing "before Cæsar" (Acts xxvii. 24), and of his making acquaintance

(as he says in a letter written afterwards from Rome to this very colony) with the "palace" and with "Cæsar's household" (Phil. i. 13; iv. 22).

Roman magistrates naturally make us think of Roman law; and this too has its close connexion with the great Apostle, on the side both of jurisprudence and jurisdiction. In his illustrations derived from legislative enactments (Gal. iii. 15; iv. 1), nay, even in his doctrinal discussions (especially when writing the Romans themselves: Rom. vii. 3, 4, 22, 23; viii. 2, 23), he sometimes uses a forensic language, which seems to argue, both on his own part and on the part of his hearers, a thorough familiarity with the civil law.

Roman Law

But our concern here is rather with the practical illustrations of the all-prevailing presence of the law, which meet us in the Acts of the Apostles, and were connected with his own experience. We see this in the appeal of the town-clerk at Ephesus (Acts xix. 40); in Gallio's sense of the limits of his jurisdiction at Corinth (Acts xviii. 14), and in the cautious question of Felix (Acts xxiii. 34) and the boastful language of Festus (Acts xxv. 16) at Cæsarea. And we see it here at Philippi—in the jailor's alarm when he thought the prisoners had escaped, and in the uneasiness of the magistrates when they found they had exceeded their jurisdiction.

Roman Citizenship

One very important and settled principle in the Roman law was that which concerned the rights of citizenship. It was the right of appeal possessed by a Roman citizen which ultimately took St Paul to Rome (Acts xxv. 11, 12), and both here and elsewhere it was his hereditary possession of the franchise (Acts xxii. 25-28) which rescued him from danger, and achieved a moral victory for the Gospel. It is curious to notice how great a stress the Philippians themselves lay on the fact of their being themselves Roman citizens (Acts xvi. 21). This was one great aggravation of the outrage which Paul and Silas had committed. And very instructive it is to see this very privilege (as possessed by the Apostles) becoming not only the cause of their own personal safety, but the means of making heathenism in the person of the magistrates bow down, and, as it were, apologise to Christianity.

Corruption of the Empire

We have hitherto, however, been chiefly occupied with the outward framework of the society under the constitution of the Roman empire. We might follow the same line of thought, and with similar results, in examining the state of men's minds and hearts at the time when the Gospel was introduced. If a providential preparation can be traced in customs and institutions, and many outward circumstances of practical life, it is also true that

we can discover a preparation, or at least a preparedness, in the spirits of men, when we look below the surface. In this point of view we might dwell on the moral corruption of an empire gorged with the spoil of provinces, and the deep despairing want of a new and purifying influence.

Combination of Unbelief and Superstition

But the incidents of St Paul's stay at Philippi rather invite our attention to another characteristic of those times, namely, the combination of unbelief and superstition. A cold and selfish scepticism was the general condition of thought and feeling at this period. But such a state of mind is far from unfavourable to certain kinds of credulity. We are not at a loss in our own day for illustrations of this fact, though it might have been expected that Christian truth would have adjusted such disturbances of human intellect and feeling. But in the times which preceded the establishment of the Gospel, free scope was given to this natural tendency. "Christianity," it has been forcibly said, "did not succeed at once to the vacant inheritance of Olympus."[1]

Spiritual Manifestations

The time when the new religion presented itself for acceptance by the world was marked by an outburst of spiritual manifestations of various kinds. In the

[1] Merivale's *Boyle Lectures for* 1864, Pref. p. xi.

decrepitude of heathenism, the credit of oracles was revived, strange and foreign superstitions were welcomed even by leading Romans, and magic and imposture, in the general dismay, found many votaries. Even power and success in regard to this world's greatness (knowing their own hollowness and inability to procure real enjoyment) were the more disposed to this craving for sorcery and excitement. "Great conquerors are generally superstitious."

Superstition in Action

The heathen literature of the period might furnish abundant illustrations of this state of thought and feeling, such as Marius, at the head of his victorious legions, consulting his Syrian prophetess, or Tiberius with his astrologers in his profligate and cruel retreat at Capri. But St Luke's own narrative furnishes us with an example which is entirely to our purpose, in the account of the Roman governor, Sergius Paulus (Acts xiii. 6, 7), first yielding to the fascination of the false prophet Elymas, and then throwing off the enchantment under the pure religious influence of St Paul. Such a state of mind as that which has here been slightly sketched was evidently adapted either for susceptibility to the Gospel, or for violent opposition to it; and this alternative must have constituted a special and decisive trial to many spirits at this great and momentous period.

Not, indeed, that such words as "superstition," "imposture," and "credulity," are adequate to explain what we read in Scripture concerning demoniac possession. This is a subject beset by many difficulties, chiefly perhaps because of the blending together of the natural and the supernatural. But we cannot deal fairly with the New Testament without recognising in these narratives a reference to real spiritual agencies independent of man, though acting on him often in combination with the phenomena of bodily and mental disease. And nothing seems more reasonable than that the powers of evil should be made more manifest at times when a conspicuous display of Divine miracles took place.

Demoniac Possession

As with the struggle which Moses was called to maintain in Egypt, so with the life of Christ on earth, and the work of His Apostles. We read of exorcism, both in the Gospels (Matt. xii. 27) and also in the Acts (Acts xix. 13). The words addressed by St Paul to the demoniac slave at Philippi (Acts xvi. 18) exactly correspond with the words addressed by our Saviour Himself to the poor sufferers in the synagogue near the lake of Gennesareth (Luke iv. 35; viii. 29) except that Paul worked the miracle by Christ's power, and Christ by His own. And just as the Apostle, in writing to the Corinthians

Evil Powers Aroused

(1 Cor. x. 20), identified idolatrous worship with the agency of evil spirits, so here his spiritual insight enabled him to see the same malignant power in the contortions and frenzied excitement of the wretched woman who followed him and his companions. There is consistency throughout in the way in which this subject is mentioned in various parts of the New Testament.

—In Antagonism to the Gospel

And especially we should notice here, as in the narratives of the Evangelists, how the near presence of the power of Jesus Christ brings out into active expression both the sense of human misery and violent opposition to the Gospel. There are some special features in this case at Philippi. Thus, in describing the demoniac slave, a peculiar phrase is used in the Greek, properly applicable to the priestess at Delphi, that great centre of divination in the Greek and Roman world. And this reminds us of the significant position of St Paul at this moment —now on classical ground—and facing, in his Master's name, all the superstition and false religion of the famous classical times. A further point is the combination of material interests with the operation of the powers of darkness. The damsel possessed by a spirit of divination brought her masters "much gain" by her soothsaying (Acts xvi. 16). And it was the loss of this mere

—And in Defence of Self-Interest

ST. PAUL AND THE PHILIPPIAN PYTHONESS.
(Acts xvi, 17.)

profit, obtained through influence over superstitious minds, that brought the Apostle into collision with the authorities. "When her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone," they arrested them, and dragged them before the magistrates. But, lastly, this very collision with the powers of human government led, as we have seen, to a signal triumph of the Divine cause at Philippi.

St Paul's Position

And now having noticed in succession certain features of the Roman world, which present themselves at this place in connexion with the earliest spread of the Gospel by the hands of St Paul, it seems proper that we should conclude by glancing at the Apostle in his more personal and individual position. The same thread of thought which guided us above, may guide us here to one very practical reflection. The consideration of Providence on the great scale should not make us forgetful of Providence on the small scale, while the thought of the latter comes more directly home to the experience of our own lives. The same hand which controlled the growth of Roman polity, and brought even cruelty and superstition into combinations favourable to the diffusion of Christianity, guided also in minute detail the steps of the appointed ambassador, and built up his character while it regulated his work.

Hindered and Helped

The characteristic operation of Providence may be seen both negatively and positively in this mission to Philippi. Negatively, we find the Apostle's progress hindered in his efforts to introduce the Gospel, first into Asia, and then into Bithynia (Acts xvi. 6, 7); and then, positively, his course is directed into Macedonia in the most unexpected manner, and yet without any doubt. Negatively, he is humbled, immediately on his arrival in Macedonia, by discouragement and injustice; and then, positively, by God's blessing on a judicious use of these very sufferings, he sees his cause triumphant. He can retire for the present with dignity and leisure (Acts xvi. 37, 40); and years afterwards, when sending a letter from Rome to the Philippians, he can write with a satisfaction and joy which he never expresses in regard to any other church.

Trained for Humility and Confidence

All this was a training both for humility and for confidence,—humility as regarded his own unguided wisdom,—confidence as regarded God's goodness and power. And it is instructive thus to unite the thought of God's watchful care of each one of His separate servants with the thought of His great superintendence over the long evolutions of history. While Egypt is being prepared not only to become the first home of the Chosen People, but to take the lead in the progressive course of national

civilisation, the Lord is "with Joseph" in the prison and the palace. While the Roman empire is fulfilling its appointed task, giving the facilities of its organisation to the new and final Revelation, and providing the materials for the institutions of modern times, St Paul has his Heavenly Father ever near him in all his moments of dejection or perplexity (Acts xviii. 9; xxiii. 11). It is not by dreaming over general and abstract views, but by calmly contemplating the Divine combination of what we distinguish as great things and small things, that we attain to true conceptions of the Perfect Goodness and Power. The contrast and combination are forcibly expressed in two contiguous verses of one of the Psalms (Ps. cxlv. 13, 14):—"Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations:—the Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down."

VI

GREEK ART AND GREEK PHILOSOPHY—ATHENS

St Paul at Athens—The Beauty of the City—Its Buildings—Their Appeal to St Paul—How to Answer it: not with Contempt: but by using (1) Greek Art: and his Surroundings—This Religion Ineffectual: and Degrading—(2) Greek Philosophy—Discussions in "the Market"—The Stoic and the Epicurean—Their Attitude to God—St Paul's Theology—God as Creator—God as Father—The Unity of the Human Race—An Abandonment of Prejudice—The Purposes of God: in Dealing with Nations—The Appeal of the Moment—A Call to Repentance—The Call a Command—Supported by the Resurrection—A Challenge to Athenian Convictions—Art and Philosophy in Conflict with Faith—The Place of Art: and of Philosophy: in Christianity.

St Paul at Athens

Greek Art and Greek Philosophy—these are the two subjects which instinctively occur to the mind when we think of Athens; and these two subjects, without any artificial effort, may mark out and direct the course of our reflections, in considering St Paul's visit to that city, and his speech on the Areopagus.

The Beauty of the City

Whatever is beautiful, indeed, not only in Art but in Nature, seems easily to associate itself with Athens. In all the scenery surrounding that city, there is a charm

which delights the feelings of all who have beheld it, and the impression of which never leaves the memory. Nothing could be more pleasing, more lively, and more distinct, than the outline of the coast. The indentations of the shore, the celebrated islands, the bright water gleaming in the sunshine, the dark shadows on the mountains in the background, form themselves into a picture as remarkable for its symmetry as its variety. The outline, too, of the hills which stand about the city is eminently impressive, both from its beauty and its definiteness. While over the whole there is spread an atmosphere of the most pellucid transparency and clearness, which the Athenian poets are never weary of celebrating. With these elements we must combine (if we think of the flourishing times of Athens) rich vineyards and corn-fields in the plain, from which the Acropolis rises abruptly amidst a few lower eminences, and stands high above the gardens and streets. Our own poet's instinct, which, in *Paradise Regained*, associates the "pure air" of Attica, the "bees" of Hymettus, the nightingales in the "olive-grove of Academe," with the "arts and eloquence," and the "noble buildings" of this city "on the Ægean shore," is true to all the facts of the case.[1]

The buildings of Athens were in harmony, and

[1] *Paradise Regained*, iv. 238-248.

even now in their decay are felt to be in harmony, with the scene around. The Parthenon and Propylæa on the Acropolis, and other ruins which survive in lower positions (especially the temple of the Olympian Jupiter, magnificent and impressive still), furnish us with a standard by which we can measure the "severe and stately splendour" of the larger features of ancient Athens; while we can follow with our eyes and with our footsteps all the rising and falling of the ground on which the city formerly stood, and while we have abundant materials in early records for restoring in imagination those works of art and those tokens of religious, though mistaken, "devotion," which made Athens to be a wonder in the earth. With its temples and colonnades, its gilding and gay colours, its statues of deified heroes among the plane trees on the level ground, its little sanctuaries on the ledges of the rocks, and its bright sunshine over all, it was, indeed, an animated scene of "festive beauty": and we cannot wonder that the Apostle Paul himself found his mind impressed, when, in the absence of his friends, who were still in Macedonia (Acts xvii. 14-16), he wandered in solitude (1 Thess. iii. 1) through the streets.

Its Buildings

That he did go round the city and look very carefully and thoughtfully at the objects which

met his eye, is abundantly evident from the words used by the sacred historian (Acts xvii. 16, 23). Nor need we suppose that his mind was absolutely indifferent to the sight of beauty, or destitute of principles of critical taste. He had received what we may rightly call a classical education, and had been, during a great part of his life, in contact with the higher Greek and Roman civilisation. But we cannot for a moment imagine him to have looked on the buildings and statues of Athens simply in the light of works of art. Still less can we conceive that he gazed in the spirit of idle curiosity. In fact, one of the marked features of this narrative is the picture of his intense earnestness contrasted with the frivolous employment of the Athenians and the ordinary "strangers." Their passion was ever to be hearing or telling something later than the latest news. "They spent their time," says St Luke, "in nothing else" (Acts xvii. 21). He, on the contrary, had received once for all—for himself and for others—that "good news" which, while ever the same, is never obsolete; and to the telling of this news he had given his life.

Their Appeal to St Paul

Thus he gazed on the objects before him with a deep and serious feeling far beyond the range of mere criticism and taste. All that he saw was connected in his thoughts with the moral and eternal interests of

How to Answer It

the men who surrounded him. His one problem was how to use the opportunity for their religious good, and for the honour of his Master. With admirable skill he seized upon the inscription of an altar for his text, and used the heathen temples of Athens as a framework for his argument. We may take these two points out of the context and notice them separately.

—Not with Contempt

In the first place we should observe that he does not begin by any rude and insulting contempt. There is indeed in his words a very deep and penetrating rebuke; but he does not (like some who profess to be his followers) expect to succeed by affronting his audience. The real import of the opening sentence (Acts xvii. 22) is this,—that he recognised in Athens a "very diligent attention to religion." And this was undoubtedly the character of the place. The Jewish historian Josephus[1] says that the Athenians were "the most religious of all the Greeks"; and Heathen testimonies to the same effect might easily be adduced.

—But by using (1) Greek Art

But St Paul, though gracefully stating what was true in this respect, and thus winning a friendly attention, does not go in the least degree beyond the truth in any commendation of the quality of this religion. His aim is to show its hollowness and weakness;

[1] *C. Apion*, ii. 11.

and this he does by means of the very illustration he takes of the peculiar "religiousness" of the Athenians. He had seen in his survey of their city an altar dedicated "to the unknown God" (Acts xvii. 23). The fact of the existence of altars of Athens with such inscriptions is sufficiently attested from other sources; and whatever meaning we assign to the phrase, nothing could more clearly declare the need of a revelation. In the very minuteness of their care for religion the inhabitants of the most highly educated city of Greece proclaimed their ignorance. And such is the first lesson which the Apostle draws from his text. "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you."

—And His Surroundings

Next we see him using the glorious buildings in prospect as a medium of instruction and rebuke,—pointing, as it were, from the Areopagus to the Acropolis above him, with its Propylæa and Parthenon, and the spear and shield of Minerva gleaming in the sun,—and urging on his hearers that even their own convictions and their own poets ought to show them that such statues and such buildings are inadequate, and worse than inadequate, representatives and homes of the Deity (Acts xvii. 24, 29). These works of art, however beautiful, were after all merely human; they could never raise men above the human standard; and the human

standard is degraded and degrading. The Greeks doubtless thought that by this lavish expenditure, and by this exercise of careful and diligent taste, along with sumptuous festivals and cermonies, they gratified the gods, and made them placable and propitious.

This Religion Ineffectual

Such a religion as this has evidently no tendency to raise men to a higher morality than that which they are disposed to follow. On the contrary, it affords an easy means of escape from all serious convictions, and, by occupying the mind and feelings with a pretence of devotion, facilitates a gradual declension to a lower moral level; and such, in fact, was the history of the Greeks, as of other Pagans, in their religious and social state. Men naturally "love darkness, rather than light, because their deeds are evil" (John iii. 19). Thus even the most highly educated of the Heathen "had the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart," and "being past feeling gave themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph. iv. 18, 19).

—And Degrading

All this was ever present to St Paul's mind; and he felt when speaking at Athens as he felt when writing to Rome, that through this process of deterioration, even civilised men had "changed the glory and

the truth of God into a lie" (Rom. i. 23, 25). "The very wealth of art, that poured itself out before him, would be to him but the measure of the spiritual poverty, humiliation, and wretchedness of the people. He knew that idolatry always brings moral degradation and misery in its train, even where intellectual culture and artistic skill may have thrown an air of glory over the worship, and an aspect of refinement over the surface of society."[1]

(2) Greek Philosophy

But this address at Athens has, as it were, a separate starting-point from Philosophy, as well as from Art. Its immediate occasion was a conversation with "certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics" (Acts xvii. 18). St Paul took men always as he found them, and proceeded everywhere without delay in the execution of his Master's business. Thus at Athens, though he was alone and unfriended (1 Thess. iii. 1), with no advantages of personal presence (2 Cor. x. 1, 10), a Jew among the Greeks, and speaking a dialect which deviated perceptibly from the pure Attic language, he "disputed daily with them that met with him" (Acts xvii. 17).

Discussions in "the Market"

The place where these discussions occurred, was that which in the English version is called "the market," an open area surrounded by buildings of national interest and of

[1] Dr W. L. Alexander, *St Paul at Athens*, p. 11.

great beauty, near the base of the Acropolis. This place was the common resort both of idlers and of philosophical disputants; and from hence he was taken up the stone steps to the summit of the Areopagus, as a quiet and suitable spot for an uninterrupted discourse, a spot, too, made sacred by ancient religious traditions. It would be a mistake to trace in the speech a direct and systematic refutation of these two philosophical sects; but in briefly stating what their principles were, we shall see in a moment how the whole tone and temper of the speech, and of Christianity, is opposed to them.

The Stoic and the Epicurean

The Stoic and Epicurean systems agreed in this, that they had reference mainly to life and practice; and herein, doubtless, was their chief point of contact with St Paul. But the morality of the Stoic was a stern, self-supporting pride, confident of inherent power to overcome passion, and acknowledging no sympathy with human weakness. To the Epicurean, pleasure was the standard according to which his practice was regulated; and his highest aim was to enjoy life, without being disturbed either by calamity or by conscience. It is evident that these systems represent two classes of men, to whom the Gospel must always be antagonistic. Christianity has no worse enemies than self-satisfaction and self-gratification.

But there were also Stoic and Epicurean tenets within the domain of Science, or at least, on the scientific side of Natural Religion, with which portions of St Paul's speech are in direct collision. The Stoic identified God with the world, and viewed the popular mythology with no disfavour. The Epicurean regarded the world as an accident, and held that if the gods existed at all, they did not disturb their happiness by taking any notice of it.

Their Attitude to God

The Apostle rises at once to a far higher sphere in the view which he presents of the relation between God and the Material Universe, as well as between God and the Human Race. And it is remarkable how far, even in the matter of Science, he is in advance of the highest intellects of his time, and how some of the most important and interesting questions of our own day are touched here by his firm and masterly hand.

St Paul's Theology

And first, it is doubtful whether the mere idea of the creation of material things by a Supreme Power was apprehended at all by the Greeks. And as to man, it does not appear that they were in the habit of drawing any very precise line between his origin and the origin of the gods. In these respects alone (not to touch the ground of moral truth) the Jew was far above the wisest Athenians. To

God as Creator

set clearly before them the infinite distance which separates the Creator from the created, and the absolute dependence of the latter on the former, this was itself a revelation.

God as Father

But with the fact of the creation of the human race by one Supreme God, there is coupled in St Paul's speech the further fact of their continued support from the same powerful and gracious hand (Acts xvii. 25, 28). These two facts in combination make up the great truth of the fatherhood of God, which is here set forth in glorious and comprehensive language. There is indeed a mischievous extreme in which this truth is sometimes presented, as though it involved the whole of God's relation to men. But there is nothing in the general fatherhood of God to hinder His special fatherhood towards those who have entered into close filial communion with Him through Christ: just as there is nothing in His creation and superintendence of the whole human race to hinder His selection of the Jewish people for a particular purpose.

Still there is a danger of an opposite extreme: and certainly the Bible, if we duly attend to it, does not allow us to forget the importance of the truth, that God gives us all our temporal blessings, and orders all the passing events of our lives. A reverential and grateful recognition of Almighty

goodness and power are incumbent on us, even when our thoughts rise no higher than the things of this world. To our negligence in this respect we may well apply the expostulation of God through the prophet Malachi: "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if I then be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?" (Mal. i. 6).

The Unity of the Human Race

Closely connected with the unity of God, and His fatherhood over all men, is the great truth of the Unity of the Human Race. The bold assertion of this truth by St Paul at Athens must have startled his hearers. The notion of a plurality of races was almost necessarily connected by the Greeks with their custom of believing in a plurality of gods. But further, the pride of nationality fostered then an error which the impatient temper of science fosters now. Moreover, the Athenians had a traditional belief that they were sprung from the soil of Attica, and that they were honourably separate from all other nations of the earth. This unity of race, again, was proclaimed here by a Jew, who would naturally be an object of special disdain. Yet, on the other hand, no Jew could possibly have been listened to for a moment, if under such circumstances he had ventured on any assertion of the superiority of his own nation.

An Abandonment of Prejudice

The more carefully we consider this speech, the more we admire the wisdom and self-restraint as well as the boldness of St Paul. In telling the Athenians without reserve that God had "made all nations of one blood" (Acts xvii. 26), he showed how he had laid aside all the natural prejudices of the Jews; for no hereditary feeling was stronger among them than the sense of their separation from all the rest of mankind. And no words could more effectually inculcate both on Jew and Gentile the lesson of universal charity. Again we may employ the same prophet's words, which are too sadly applicable to many passages of human history: "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?" (Mal. ii. 10).

The Purposes of God

But further, St Paul not only deals thus comprehensively with what may be called the scientific side of humanity, but he presents us also with a true philosophy of History, by telling us that God had definitely fixed both the countries where, and the times when, each national existence should receive its development (Acts xvii. 26): and all this progressive and varied course of human history the Apostle distinctly connects with a great moral and religious plan,—"that they

should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him" (Acts xvii. 27).

—In Dealing with Nations

There is doubtless much mystery here, which we shall never be able fully to understand, till the whole plan is brought to its conclusion. But this at least is evident, that in the varied distribution of nations, and in the circumstances under which they have successfully risen and decayed, the experiment has been fully tried as to what man can do in the matter of religion without supernatural help. The result has been universal failure. And if we are haunted by a perplexing wonder that God has not seen fit to communicate His revelation more widely, still we must remember this, that its very communication has often through man's sinful misuse of it, been the occasion of shamefully dishonouring him:[1] so that we cannot avoid the conviction that in many cases it would have been better for men to have known less of Christ.

The Appeal of the Moment

But now the speaker's discourse passes on to another subject, to which in fact all the preceding part has been preliminary. This time of non-interference and long impunity in the course of the world's heathenism has passed by; and now "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the

[1] *The Ways of God*, p. 197.

world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 30, 31). Here is a direct appeal to the consciousness of sin and the fear of death. Each individual hearer is reminded of his own responsibility, and made aware of his personal relation to the "unknown God." Just so in the opening of the Epistle to the Romans St Paul goes direct to the consciences of the Heathen, and reminds them of their liability to judgment, and of the nakedness of their character to the eye of God (Rom. i. 18, 32; ii. 15). When this kind of appeal lays hold of the heart, the mysteries of religion are in a great measure forgotten, and speculative questions begin to fall into their right places. The consciousness of sin is a sad reality; and the definite prospect of judgment is a call to repentance, which it is madness to disobey. But, on the other hand, the very word "repentance" is full of encouragement. If the invitation is as general as the threatening, then none are precluded from the possibility of recovery. This God is "not far from every one of us" (Acts xvii. 27). His mercy is close at hand. "Therefore thou needest not say, Who will ascend to heaven and bring Him down from above? or Who will descend into the abyss and bring Him up from the dead? He is as near to thee as the law of the Holy One in thy conscience, as the longing after salvation

A Call to Repentance

in thy soul, as the involuntary cry for help and the ceaseless sighing after peace in thy heart."[1]

The Call a Command

We should observe how firm and fearless a ground the Apostle takes here. He speaks of the call to repentance as a "command," and sets forth the majesty of Jesus Christ as requiring absolute homage and submission. And he proceeds to add, that abundant attestation has been provided for the claims of this announcement, in that this Judge and Saviour has been "raised from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31). He lays stress on the resurrection, just as he does elsewhere both in speeches and in epistles (Acts xxv. 19; xxvi. 8; Rom. i. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 14), because in regard to evidence this is the main point. Our belief in the whole scheme of redemption rests on this fact. Thus faith also is here preached by St Paul to the Athenians, and the close of the speech is so constructed as to throw the whole attention on Jesus Christ. No doubt he would have dwelt more in detail on the redeeming work of the Saviour, as he did soon afterwards at Corinth (1 Cor. ii. 2), had he not been suddenly interrupted by the rudeness of some and the more really hostile politeness of others (Acts xvii. 32).

Supported by the Resurrection

Nor need we be surprised that the mention of

[1] Lange, i. p. 183.

A Challenge to Athenian Convictions

the resurrection immediately produced either open opposition or incredulous dislike. For it explicitly declared that another life was to be preferred to the present life, — another life, too, on the threshold of which a judgment was to be encountered. Now to the Athenian this life was everything. "It was the very characteristic of classical antiquity to root itself in this present world, of which man is the centre and climax, and in its thoughts and efforts not to look beyond the order and beauty perceptible in the earthly sphere; and consequently death, with all its accompaniments, was kept at the greatest possible distance from ancient Art, while it drew within its range whatsoever was human.[1]

Nor was the thought of resurrection less uncongenial to the philosophy of his hearers. It was opposed alike to their theory and their experience. St Paul's preaching was not in harmony with either the substance or the method of the teachers who were most held in honour at Athens. Even the imperfection of his language (2 Cor. x. 10), which for a time was forgotten in the elevation of the thoughts which he expressed, may now with the utterance of an unpalatable subject have provoked an impatient disdain. But above all we must remember (and this is sufficient

[1] Baumgarten, *Apostolic History*, ii. p. 199.

to account for all the repugnance which was manifested), that the subject was presented in necessary combination with the assertion of sin and a call to repentance.

Art and Philosophy in Conflict with Faith

It is only when this moral and religious view is taken of the whole range of human interests, that artistic pursuits and the vigorous efforts of reason are seen in their true place. By withdrawing themselves from this moral light and taking up an independent position, as though they were in themselves sufficient guides for man, Art and Philosophy become the opponents of religion. And it is to be feared, that in our day, too, they very often stand in this attitude of hostility. The mere varnish of society—the complacent gratification of taste—the love of amusement, and the subservience to fashion—the blind admiration of genius, and the criticism which finds its end in itself,—these things in themselves constitute no approximation whatever to Christianity, though they may for a time fill the place which Christianity ought to fill. The highest refinement may be utter "ignorance." Hero-worhip may be absolute idolatry.

So, too, Philosophy, whether it take the form of attachment to favourite theories, or an exclusive passion for physical science, or the adroitness of practical sagacity, may, in its self-sustained attitude,

present a direct opposition to that Religion, which accepts of no attainments as a substitute for repentance, but requires from all alike humility and resignation, and the devotion of the whole man to a Crucified Redeemer.

But the Hostility not Inherent

Not, however, that there is any inherent hostility between Art and Philosophy on the one hand, and the Christian Religion on the other. Some persons talk of this subject in a way which is most unwise, most unlike the method of St Paul, and eminently adapted to excite the disgust of men of refinement and education, as though ugliness had some natural affinity with piety, and as though ignorance were in itself holier than knowledge. As to the degree and manner in which Art can be made subservient to Religion, there must, indeed be much difference of opinion: and there is great need why we should exercise forbearance with one another, especially since our divisions have developed so many sectional and domestic traditions.

The Place of Art

That there is a place for Art in connexion with Christianity no one can doubt, who considers our ancient cathedrals, or our wealth of church music, or the stores of sacred poetry which have accumulated in the course of centuries, or the admiration which is justly given to the oratory of the pulpit. And in fact, there are few efforts which recommend

themselves more thoroughly to our taste than this very speech of St Paul. "Viewed simply in itself, we may well call it a masterpiece of the highest style of oratory; skilfully adapted to the audience, and yet severely faithful to truth; fitted to persuade, by convincing the judgment without alarming prejudice or offending taste; calculated to stimulate and guide all the higher powers of man, so as to bring the hearer of his own accord, and with the full assent of his will, to the conclusion the speaker would enforce."[1]

—And of Philosophy

If wisdom is shown in a judicious choice and adaptation of means, then may this speech be called an effort, not only of consummate Art, but of the highest practical Philosophy. We have seen also how, with regard to speculative truth, the Apostle puts himself in this speech side by side with the great questions of his day, and of our day. Nor should this be forgotten, that in regard to Physical Science, Christianity since St Paul's time has been directly conducive to the development of a higher Philosophy than was ever known in the ancient world; while in reference to the applications of Science to beneficent ends, to the relief of suffering, and the elevation and education of man, our Holy Religion has been still more directly operative.

[1] *St Paul at Athens*, p. 42.

Both meet in Christianity

Many questions, indeed, both practical and speculative, remain to be solved. But in the sphere of morals, the highest Philosophy and the purest Art have already met, and found their realisation in Christianity—the Philosophy of the plan of salvation, the Art of a holy and religious life. "Howbeit we speak wisdom," says the Apostle, "even the hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world knew" (1 Cor. ii. 6-8). "All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" are "hid" in Christ (Col. ii. 3). True charity "doth not behave itself unseemly" (1 Cor. xiii. 5). To practise diligently "whatsoever things are pure and lovely," is the standard of the Christian (Phil. iv. 8).

VII

THE COMPANIONS OF ST PAUL—CORINTH

The Friendships of St Paul—Corinth their Centre—Its Association with the Epistles to the Thessalonians: to the Corinthians: to the Romans—The Apostle surrounded by Friends—Barnabas—John Mark—Silas—Timothy; Examples of St Paul's Tenderness towards Him: The Bonds of Union—Timothy's Zeal—His Mission to Thessalonica: at Corinth: at Rome: at Ephesus—Titus—The Mission of Titus to Corinth—The Man and his Task—The Work Wisely Done—And Done beyond Reproach—The Work of Titus in Crete—His Position Isolated—His Success Undoubted—Tychicus—Trophimus—Epaphroditus—Luke—Apollos—Aquila and Priscilla—Christianity and Labour—Helpers of the Ministry—Women in the Apostolic Church—Phœbe—Other Friends of the Apostle.

Friendship has been consecrated by our Saviour Himself; and the union of Christian friends has ever since been found to be one of the most effectual means of spreading the Gospel and building up the saints.

The Friendships of St Paul

St Paul is the most eminent illustration which the Church has yet seen of this holy and fruitful principle. He felt the need of companions: he was lonely in their absence: he lived in their life: he suffered in their sorrows. And this sympathy became the

abounding source of a vast amount of co-operation and active service in the highest of all causes.

Corinth their Centre

I shall now gather together into one view the chief Scriptural notices of the companions of St Paul. Nor could any scene be more suitable for this combination than the city of Corinth, at which we are now arrived. This place may be taken as a centre for his friendships as naturally as for the fields of his labour. Geographically, Corinth is the middle point between Asia Minor, the place of his early victories among the heathen, and Italy, the place of his latest labours and his martyrdom. It is also the point to which his travelling through Northern Greece converged, both on his second and his third missionary journeys. Thus whatever friendships he made at various times of his life were ranged in a kind of symmetrical order round this City of the Isthmus. And especially we should notice the fact that we have now reached the point when the first of those letters were written, which have furnished us with a perpetual record of his love for individuals, while giving instruction for all ages in the immutable principles of religious truth.

Its Association with the Epistles to the Thessalonians

It may be well to glance at some of those letters which naturally connect themselves with Corinth, before we enter upon biographical details. And first we have, written from this city itself,

those two Epistles to the Thessalonians which in chronological order are the first of all St Paul's letters, and first too of all that long series of correspondence by letter-writing among Christians, which has strengthened and enriched every age of the Church. In these Epistles not only does St Paul remind the Thessalonians how he had exercised among them all a mother's tenderness and all a nurse's care (1 Thess. ii. 7), not only does he express his present confidence in their affection and faithfulness (2 Thess. iii. 4), but he gives utterance to his vehement longing wish to see them again. Taken from them "for a short time in presence, not in heart," he had "endeavoured the more abundantly to see their face with great desire": he had more than once made the attempt to revisit them, but Satan had "hindered" him (1 Thess. ii. 17, 18). "Night and day" he had "prayed exceedingly that he might see their face." His very life consisted in their "standing fast in the Lord" (1 Thess. iii. 8, 10).

—The Epistles to the Corinthians

Next we have those Epistles which were written (when he was approaching Greece the second time) to Corinth itself, the first from Ephesus, the second from Macedonia. Nothing can exceed the warmth of affection expressed in these letters. "As my beloved sons I warn you: for though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not

many fathers" (1 Cor. iv. 14, 15). But especially is this conspicuous in the second letter, which is full of all the jealousy of the most sensitive friendship. "I wrote unto you with many tears, that ye might know my love" (2 Cor. ii. 4): "We are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours" (2 Cor. i. 14): "Very gladly will I spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (2 Cor. xii. 15): "Ye are in our hearts to die and live with you" (2 Cor. vii. 3).

—The Epistle to the Romans

In the third place we have the Epistle to the Romans, sent from Corinth during his second visit. Here he is writing chiefly to strangers, and he half apologises for dictating to those whom he did not personally know (Rom. xv. 15). But let the eye turn to that last chapter, which is full of messages to individuals: and it will easily be seen how warm and incessant were those streams of personal friendship which gushed from the Apostle's heart.

The Apostle surrounded by Friends

Thus even these letters, which centre, as it were, in Corinth, present him to us as a man surrounded by friends, with whom he was perpetually communicating or longing to communicate. In the midst of all the varied and general work involved in "the care of all the churches," his recollection of individuals was always fresh. "He lived in his friends; he felt with them and for them; he was

anxious about them; he gave them help, and in turn he looked for comfort from them."[1]

Barnabas

In proceeding to specify and to describe some of these friends, our natural beginning is with BARNABAS. Probably he and Paul may have been acquainted with each other in early life; for Cyprus and Cilicia were near together. Certain it is that early in Paul's Christian life he was laid by Barnabas under a debt of gratitude which he could never forget. All the actions of this Cyprian Levite give us the impression of a noble and generous character. "He was not such a Levite as he that passed by the poor wounded Samaritan. He poured spiritual wine and oil into the wounds which the great Way-layer and Robber of the soul had made."[2]

The Man and his Name

Much is implied in the very name (whether we understand it to mean "Son of Exhortation" or "Son of Consolation") which the Apostles themselves assigned to Joses, when he generously gave his property to his poor fellow-Christians (Acts iv. 36, 37), and we gather the same impression from all that is afterwards recorded of him: alike from that critical help given to Paul, which has just been alluded to (Acts ix. 27); from his appointment to go and work in the building up of the new "Christian" church

[1] J. H. Newman, *Sermons on Various Occasions*, p. 130.

[2] Archdeacon Evans, *Script Biog.*, i. p. 357.

in Antioch (Acts xi. 22, 26); from the joyful and encouraging spirit with which this "good man" entered into the task (Acts xi. 23, 24); from the unselfish way in which he took a journey to Tarsus, that he might associate Saul's labours with his own (Acts xi. 25); from the choice of him, with Saul, to carry the charitable relief from Antioch to the poor in Jerusalem (Acts xi. 30; xii. 25); from the choice of him again to go to Jerusalem on the great business of the Council (Acts xv. 2; Gal. ii. 1); and from the description which is given of him, on their return with the decree, as one who had "hazarded his life for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xv. 26).

—And his Frailty

It is indeed true that, like Peter, Barnabas has bequeathed to us in one occurrence (and this under the influence of Peter) a warning instance of human weakness (Gal. ii. 13). But the examples of Scripture would be far less useful to us than they are, if they were destitute of any tokens of frailty. As to the dispute of Barnabas and Paul concerning Mark (Acts xv. 37-39), however we may distribute the blame, at least it was an open and candid dispute. And it did not impair their subsequent friendship. We find St Paul some years afterwards rejoicing to mention Barnabas as actively continuing his disinterested work for the good of the church (1 Cor. ix. 6); and years afterwards again, it is

delightful to trace the same feeling. For in the Epistle to the Colossians (Col. iv. 10), where Mark is mentioned with friendly confidence, is there not evidently the recollection of old times in the description which is given him, that he is "kinsman to Barnabas"?

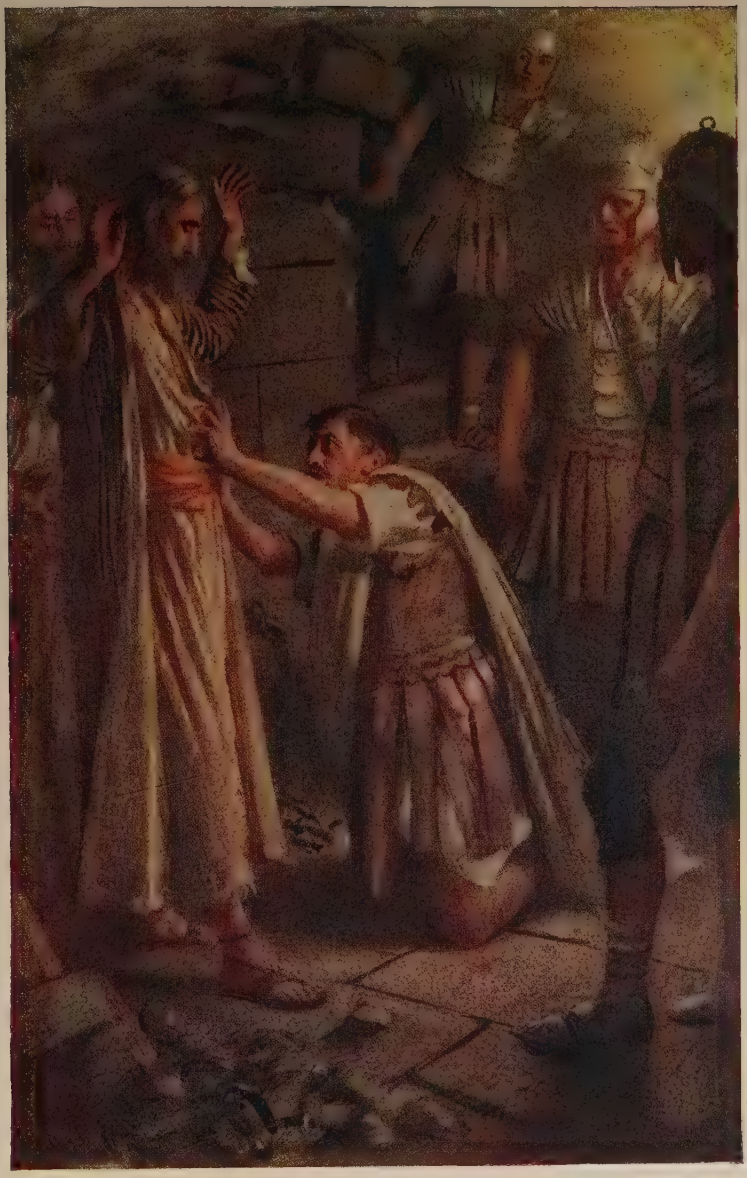
John Mark

And now our thoughts naturally rest for a moment on this "John, whose surname was MARK," who in that dispute became the hinge on which the arrangements for the second missionary journey turned. He too must be reckoned as one of the friends and companions of St Paul. For not only did he accompany him to Antioch on the return from the charitable mission to Jerusalem (Acts xii. 25), but in the early part of the first missionary journey he acted officially as his "minister" (Acts xiii. 5), and co-operated with him in instructing and baptizing converts. And though his heart failed him at one point (Acts xiii. 13), and through the love of home (Acts xii. 12) or through fear of danger he returned to Jerusalem, yet there is abundant proof that this wavering disciple thoroughly repented of his weakness, and that his heart was afterwards braced up to his Master's service. There is no reason whatever to blame Barnabas for believing at Antioch (Acts xv. 37) that his kinsman was now thoroughly steadfast and sincere, though it was evidently wise and prudent in St Paul to decline to take him into a district

where his inconsistency might be known, and where, consequently, his presence would be a stumbling-block rather than a help. Nor does St Paul simply mention him afterwards, as we have seen, in a friendly tone; but in a letter written at the same time (Philem. 24), he describes him as a "fellow-labourer"; while at a still later period (in fact near the very close of his life) he goes much farther, and says: "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Tim. iv. 11). Thus, even in connexion with St Paul, and independently of his position as one of the four Evangelists, and of that connexion with St Peter known to us from other sources, St Mark is deserving of respectful and grateful mention.

Silas

Silas, too, or Silvanus, like Mark, is a link between St Paul and St Peter; and the mention of him in the Galilean Apostle's first letter (1 Peter v. 12), as well as in those letters of the Apostle of the Gentiles (1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1), which were written during the second journey, seems just to give us a glimpse of a large range of co-operation between St Paul and the Twelve, which in its details is hid from our eyes. The recorded association of Silas with St Paul is entirely limited to that period of the Apostle's life which has just been mentioned; nor have we any materials for delineating his character with confidence. He was



ST. PAUL AND THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER.
(Acts xvi, 30.)

a Roman citizen, like St Paul himself (Acts xvi. 37). He suffered with him at Philippi (Acts xvi. 19, 23), and in the prison joined with him in prayer and thanksgiving (Acts. xvi. 25), and in turning the heart of the terrified jailor to Christ (Acts xvi. 31). Together they fled by night from Thessalonica to Berea (Acts xvii. 10). And it is evident that St Paul trusted him as well as Timotheus with important responsibilities (Acts xvii. 14, 15), as well as that his own heart was strengthened and his courage raised by the presence of these friends (Acts xviii. 5; 2 Cor. i. 19).

Timothy

But our attention must now be given to that companion of St Paul, who in his case is the most marked exemplification of this active principle of Christian friendship, and concerning whom we have the fullest and clearest information. A peculiar tenderness of feeling is evident in all the Apostle's relations with Timotheus from first to last. We see this in the warm expression which is used of their first association in missionary work (it was not their first meeting: see page 67): "Him would Paul have to go forth with him" (Acts xvi. 3).

Examples of St Paul's Tenderness towards him

We see it in a most touching phrase in his latest letter, just before the close of his career, where the allusion is probably to their parting when the Apostle was arrested for his last and

fatal imprisonment at Rome: "I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears" (2 Tim. i. 3, 4).

We see it in the anxiety shown for the health of Timotheus, and the considerate advice: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (1 Tim. v. 23).

We see it in another expression of anxiety, when a responsible mission of his young fellow-disciple to Corinth was in prospect: "If Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do: let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace" (1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11).

We see it again in the last communication of all, when the Apostle's desire to see this dear friend of many years is expressed with the most urgent importunity: "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas hath forsaken me: only Luke is with me: do thy diligence to come before winter" (2 Tim. iv. 9, 10, 11, 21).

And just as a death-bed scene is made more impressive and touching by allusions to the common affairs of life, so do these words to Timotheus acquire additional tenderness, when we see that they are combined in the context with reference

to very ordinary details: "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments" (2 Tim. iv. 13).

The Bonds of Union

There were good reasons why all this affection and confidence should subsist between St Paul and Timotheus. In the first place, Timotheus was spiritually "his own son." He had been converted through his own direct influence, and in connexion with the sight of his own sufferings (1 Cor. iv. 17; 1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 2). He had been brought up, too, carefully and watchfully, in a religious home: the "unfeigned faith" of his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (2 Tim. i. 5), and his early instruction in the Hebrew Scriptures (2 Tim. iii. 15) had been the means of training him for future usefulness. The testimony also borne at Lystra and Iconium to his high character were most explicit (Acts xvi. 2), and were sanctioned and confirmed by prophetic utterances (1 Tim. i. 18; iv. 14). There is little doubt that he had already been active in the service of Christ during the interval which elapsed between the first and second Apostolic expeditions. Thus we cannot be surprised, if we trace him afterwards through many years and in various places, in close companionship with the Apostle, or on missions of high trust and responsibility.

Timothy's Zeal

Timothy's zeal at Philippi and his large-hearted sympathy (and we need not inquire whether this refers to the second or third journeys: it may refer to both) are set before us in language of much feeling, addressed from Rome to the church of that place: "I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the Gospel. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me" (Phil. ii. 19-23).

His Mission to Thessalonica

So again in reference to Thessalonica we see the Apostle placing the same confidence in his warmth of feeling, his activity and good judgment, when he sends him back from Athens, and is willing to be left there "alone," if only this his "brother and minister of God and fellow-labourer in the Gospel of Christ" may "establish" the Thessalonians, and "comfort them concerning their faith," that they should not be "moved by their afflictions" (1 Thess. iii. 1-3), and if on his return he may bring him "good tidings of their faith and charity" (1 Thess. iii. 6).

At Corinth (where we have seen that he was on the first visit: Acts xviii. 5; 2 Cor. i. 19) he had a most delicate and responsible mission to discharge five years afterwards, shortly before the second visit, being sent (Acts xix. 22) at a time when the Corinthian church was in a state of faction and rebellion, to bring them into remembrance of Paul's ways which were in Christ, as he taught everywhere in every church (1 Cor. iv. 17). —At Corinth

We find him again, after an interval of four or five years, with the Apostle at Rome (Col. i. 1; Philem. 1), whence he is again dispatched on journeys of inquiry and inspection (Phil. ii. 19-23), but where it is evident from subsequent salutations that he had secured great affection amongst the Roman Christians (2 Tim. iv. 21). One imprisonment of Timotheus is recorded (Heb. xiii. 23): but it is useless to speculate on the time and place of its occurrence. —At Rome

Finally, we see him at Ephesus, in the midst of those responsible duties which are the main subject of two Epistles. —At Ephesus

All this reveals to us a life of incessant activity and toil, and a character worthy of respect and affection. Not, indeed, that we need suppose that Timotheus was destitute of defects. From the repeated and emphatic injunctions to courage

(1 Tim. i. 18; iii. 15; iv. 14; v. 21; vi. 12), it seems not unlikely that there was something of timidity in his disposition, caused (not improbably) in some degree by his delicate health; and it is no unreasonable fancy which ascribes to him a certain softness of character and, so to speak, a "feminine piety." Nor is it likely that this would be any hindrance to the continued and deep attachment which evidently subsisted between him and St Paul; but rather the contrary. Even in common human friendship the stronger character often finds its consolation in drawing the weaker character close to itself.

Titus

The names of Timotheus and Titus are so associated together in our minds through the Pastoral Epistles in the New Testament, that the mention of one immediately reminds us of the other. It would probably surprise some cursory readers of the Bible to be told that Titus is not once named in the Acts of the Apostles. Yet so it is. For information concerning his life and work we must have recourse entirely to four Epistles, written at very distinct periods: namely, the letter to the Galatians and the second to the Corinthians, and then the second letter to Timothy and that addressed to Titus himself. It must not, however, be concluded that materials are scanty either for a description of his work or for an appreciation of

his character. Like Timotheus, he was one of St Paul's own converts (Titus i. 2); but, unlike Timotheus, whose mother was a Jewess, he was thoroughly by birth a Gentile. In fact, when Paul and Barnabas went to the Council with several companions (Acts xv. 2), Titus was among them as an express representative of the church of the uncircumcision (Gal. ii. 1-3); and while the Apostle himself promoted the circumcision of Timothy (Acts xvi. 3), he steadily resisted that of Titus (Gal. ii. 3). Thus these two men appear as illustrations of that apostolic wisdom, which in matters of indifference can, under varying circumstances, take two diametrically opposite courses. It is no less true that they appear as types of the contrasts of temperament which the Apostle included in his friendships, and which guided him in assigning to different men varieties of occupation and responsibility.

The Mission of Titus to Corinth

We shall see something of the application of this principle in the case of Titus, if we glance at the characteristic features of his mission to Corinth and of his duties in Crete. As regards his relation to the former place, we note the intense anxiety of the Apostle to meet him, and to hear news of the church of Corinth, when he was himself on his way from Ephesus to that city. Though "a door was opened unto him" for preaching the Gospel

in Troas, he "had no rest in his spirit, because he found not Titus his brother, but taking his leave of them, went from thence into Macedonia" (2 Cor. ii. 12, 13). Equally conspicuous in his extreme joy when he does meet Titus, and receives from him such news as he longed to hear. "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus" (2 Cor. vii. 4-6). It is not difficult to read in these passages both St Paul's earnest solicitude for the church at large and his deep personal love for the friend whose presence consoled him.

The Man and his Task

But if we look a little more closely into this Epistle, we obtain some insight into the particular nature of the mission of Titus at this time, and also into some of the characteristics of the man himself. He was sent back promptly with two others (and we shall see before long (see p. 128) who these others probably were) as the bearer of the second Epistle to Corinth (2 Cor. viii. 6, 17). There is also hardly any doubt that he had been one of the bearers of the first Epistle (1 Cor. xvi. 11; 2 Cor. xii. 18). Certainly Timotheus, though he was sent on a contemporary mission in

the same direction (Acts xix. 22), was not the bearer of that letter; for in the letter itself his arrival at Corinth is spoken of as doubtful (1 Cor. xvi. 10). Nor was it Apollos, who prudently declined at that time to go to Corinth, though St Paul, with characteristic generosity, urged him to go (1 Cor. xvi. 12). Now if we consider the contents of these two letters, revealing, as they do, the difficult theological and practical questions which had arisen at Corinth, the factions which were disturbing and tearing its church, the rebellious spirit of many of its members towards the Apostle, and the sanction which it gave to vice by passive acquiescence, we see at once how difficult a task was assigned to Titus, and what great qualities were required in him for the discharge of his duty.

The Work Wisely Done

Accordingly the highest praise is given to Titus for his zeal and sympathy, his grief in the sight of what was evil, and his rejoicing over that which was good. "God comforted us not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me. Yea, exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all. And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all,

how with fear and trembling ye received him" (2 Cor. vii. 7, 13, 15).

And Done beyond Reproach

To this we must add another subject. A collection was going on at this time for the poor Christians in Judæa; and their Corinthian brethren, though at first they had made great professions of liberality, had been dilatory and flagging in providing the promised fund. This difficulty, too, Titus had faced with much moral courage. When he was first among the Corinthians he had promoted this cause with great energy (2 Cor. viii. 6), and now he willingly received the Apostle's commission; indeed was eager of his own accord to return and urge its progress (2 Cor. viii. 16, 17). His integrity, too, was as conspicuous as his energy. The fund was large, and the Apostle took great precautions in regard to the proper care of it (2 Cor. viii. 20): and he appealed to the Corinthians themselves for a testimony that Titus in this matter had been above all suspicion (2 Cor. xii. 18). Reading all these passages attentively, we cannot well doubt that this companion of St Paul was remarkable for a strong, vigorous, honest, fearless character, as well as for warm sympathies and excellent judgment.

The Work of Titus in Crete

All this is in harmony with what we find in the Epistle addressed to Titus, at a subsequent period, concerning his arduous and unattractive duties in the island of

Crete. The materials with which he had to build up the Cretan church were of the most rugged kind. The political turbulence and lawless character of the inhabitants were notorious: their brutal habits so well known, that, as the Apostle himself says, they were condemned by their own poets: there was the utmost degradation among the women, and among the slaves; and to all this were added the difficulties arising from wild religious speculations.

His Position Isolated

Moreover, when we consider that Titus was isolated and unsupported in this position, we feel how much need there was of a strong character for such a post. "Here was a conspicuous token indeed of the deep confidence reposed in him by his master; which implies to us much hardness endured with cheerful patience; tells of much diligence under most disheartening labours; of faith well and truly tried by works of love; of the dedication of the whole man in body, soul, and spirit to a service which he thankfully accepted from God, and executed in the true mind of Christ."[1] We see how much is condensed into the brief expression used by the Apostle of Titus: "He is my partner and fellow-helper" (2 Cor. viii. 23). We cannot doubt that he rose to the standard set before him: "In all

His Success Undoubted

[1] Evans, *Script. Biog.*, iii. p. 327.

things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned" (Titus ii. 7, 8)—and we can well understand how the last words of St Paul concerning him are an expression of sorrowful regret at Rome (as formerly at Troas) for the absence of his friend: "Titus is departed unto Dalmatia: only Luke is with me" (2 Tim. iv. 10, 11).

Tychicus and Trophimus

Subordinate to the two, whose missions and character have been described at some length, but rather closely associated with them, are TYCHICUS and TROPHIMUS among the friends of St Paul. Both were natives of the province of Asia. The former is mentioned in five separate books of the New Testament: and all the passages more or less distinctly connect him with that district. The two names are given together on the first occasion when they occur, which is in the narrative of St Paul's return from the third journey (Acts xx. 4): and this circumstance, coupled with other considerations, makes it highly probable that they were the "brethren" (2 Cor. viii. 23) who had shortly before that time accompanied Titus with the second Epistle to Corinth. If this is a correct supposition, we obtain from the Apostle himself a delineation of their characters—for one was a brother "whose praise in the work of spreading the Gospel was in

all the churches," and who had been "chosen of the churches" themselves to travel with the contribution (2 Cor. viii. 18, 19); and the other "had oftentimes been proved diligent in many things," and now "much more diligent" (2 Cor. viii. 22) in consequence of the confidence reposed in the Corinthians.

Tychicus

This is in harmony with what is said of Tychicus in letters from Rome,—where he is described as a "beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant," and as sent to communicate to distant churches a confidential account of all that concerned the Apostle, and to "comfort their hearts" also (Eph. vi. 21, 22; Col. iv. 7, 8),—and again with what we read of his active movements in a still later group of Epistles (2 Tim. iv. 12; Titus iii. 12).

Trophimus

Trophimus is mentioned less frequently: and yet we seem to know him better, because in his case circumstances of a personal kind come more distinctly into view. He accompanied St Paul through the whole of the return to Jerusalem, and it was in consequence of a mistake concerning him that the Apostle was apprehended there (Acts xxi. 29). Thus he became the innocent cause of the long imprisonment at Cæsarea. The last notice of him, in the very latest Epistle—"Trophimus have I left at Miletus sick" (2 Tim. iv. 20)—invests him with

a closer personal interest, as a sufferer in the work of the Gospel, and as the object of the Apostle's tender feeling.

Epaphroditus

Another character, still more explicitly and conspicuously associated with suffering and sympathy, is EPAPHRODITUS. It is true, he is mentioned only in one Epistle, and that not a long one (for we cannot with any confidence, or indeed probability, identify him with the Epaphras of other Epistles: Col. iv. 12; Philem. 23); and yet we seem to know him well. This is because the Apostle dwells with so much feeling on the occasion of his visit to Rome, on the comfort he had received from him, on the deep sorrow caused by his sickness, and on the remembrance of distant friends which that sickness had quickened and made intense. All such experience is so like our own, that we appear, while we read, to be drawn peculiarly near to St Paul and his friend.

His Work

Epaphroditus had brought from the Philippians —the most generous of all the churches—relief for the wants of the imprisonment at Rome (Phil. ii. 25; iv. 18); these gifts had been most thankfully received (Phil. iv. 10, 14). Epaphroditus, too, had done signal service in the cause of Christ (Phil. ii. 30); but either from too mnch toil or from the effects of his journey, he had been dangerously ill, even

to the very verge of death (Phil. ii. 27). This sickness became the occasion of the most delicate sympathy both on his part and the Apostle's. Epaphroditus was made aware that the Philippians had heard of this sickness, and that it had caused them much distress; and this was a cause of distress to him (Phil. ii. 26). The Apostle, with the sagacity of a sensitive heart, understood his feeling, and, thankful for his recovery, desired his return, though the loss was great to himself. He had wept in the suffering of Epaphroditus: and now he could unselfishly rejoice in the prospect of the joy of the Philippians. Nothing could surpass the consideration and courtesy of the sentence which he adds: "I send him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful" (Phil. ii. 28).

St Paul had himself had experience of sickness and of the value of friendship in connexion with sickness. The correct translation of what we read in the Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. iv. 13) is this: "Ye know how it was through failing health that I preached the Gospel to you at the first." He had been seized by an attack of illness in passing through that district, and forced to delay; but delay had given to him the opportunity of making Christ known to the Galatians. And it is a coincidence not

lightly to be regarded, that immediately after leaving that neighbourhood we find him in the companionship of St Luke (Acts xvi. 10). Is it not a reasonable supposition that bodily weakness on one side, and medical care on the other, formed one of the links which bound these two apostolic men together?

His Companionship with St Paul

It is most interesting to trace the presence of St Luke with St Paul through large portions of the narrative in the Acts, if it be only by the change of a pronoun (see Acts xx. 5), and to think of the closeness of that friendship which went through the experience of so much suffering and toil, not the least remarkable part of this experience being that of the voyage and shipwreck (Acts xxv. ii. 1). Nor was this companionship limited within the range of time included in the book of Acts. We find Luke with his friend and master still, when he wrote the earlier Epistles from his first imprisonment at Rome (Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24), while from the fact that he is not mentioned in the later Epistle, and that Philippi had already been one of his familiar spheres of labour, we are disposed to conclude that he was soon sent to that city and that he in fact is the "true yoke-fellow," to whom the charge is given, that he is to "help the women which had laboured with Paul in the Gospel, with Clement also, and other his fellow-labourers,

whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. iv. 3). And in the last imprisonment we find him, in the passage more than once adduced (2 Tim. iv. 11), in contrast with others, faithful and close by his side to the end. All the interest which we feel in St Luke as the writer of that third Gospel, which has such tender and winning characteristics, is much enhanced, if we think of him as the biographer of St Paul, and also as "the beloved physician."

Apollos

It is difficult to pursue a very symmetrical course in enumerating the companions of St Paul; but as we go in any order of succession from one to another, we see him in new relations to the church at large, and are called to notice new sides of his character. Apollos reminds us of Ephesus as well as Corinth. First we see him in the former city, with his fervent spirit and power in the Scriptures, "speaking and diligently teaching the things of the Lord," though knowing the Gospel only so far as it was revealed by John the Baptist (Acts xviii. 24, 25). Next we find him, after receiving further instruction from Aquila and Priscilla, proceeding to Corinth, and there, through his eloquent and learned exposition of the Old Testament, vigorously "helping those who had believed through grace," and convincing others (Acts xviii. 26-28).

His Influence

This exactly corresponds with what we read soon afterwards in the letter written by St Paul from Ephesus to Corinth (1 Cor. iii. 6), when he says that he had "planted" and Apollos "watered,"—in other words, that in the interval between the visit to Corinth and the writing of the letter, Apollos had promoted there the work begun by himself, and in a spirit harmonious with his own. Not, indeed, that results of unmixed good followed from this visit of Apollos to the city of the Isthmus. Party spirit there was violent, and one party (not through his fault) attached itself to him (1 Cor. iii. 4), as was indeed very natural in the case of one so "eloquent" and learned.

His Relations with St Paul

Even this circumstance, however, serves to bring out into stronger relief some very admirable features of the characters of the two men. In the midst of this very state of things, Apollos being now again at Ephesus, St Paul was strongly desirous that he should return to Corinth, but Apollos declined to go "at that time" (1 Cor. xvi. 12). This shows that great natural confidence subsisted between the two men, that there was a generous and confiding spirit and a total absence of jealousy on one side, and much prudence, self-restraint and delicate consideration on the other. Nor is there any reason to doubt that the same relations continued till

the latter part of St Paul's career, when we find Apollos "diligently" moving from place to place, and his friend anxious that all his wants should be supplied (Titus iii. 13).

With AQUILA and PRISCILLA, who have just been referred to, a new element appears in our enumeration. We have in them not simply individual workers in co-operation with the great Apostle, but an example of domestic life drawn into closer bonds by the Gospel, and through that union made useful in spreading the Gospel. There is little doubt, too, from the order in which the names occur (not only in Rom. xvi. 3, and 2 Tim. iv. 19, but, according to the true reading, in Acts xviii. 26), that Priscilla was the more energetic and conspicuous character of the two. Very instructive it is that the one man, who is pointed out to us in the New Testament as remarkable for his eloquence and his Biblical knowledge, should have been made wiser and better through the instruction of a woman.

Aquila and Priscilla

There is a further point of interest in this association of St Paul with this wedded pair. It shows us Christianity in connexion with industrial life. The movements of Aquila and Priscilla, who appear first as driven out from Rome, and consequently exercising their trade of tent-making at Corinth

Christianity and Labour

(Acts xviii. 2, 3),—then proceeding to Ephesus (Acts xviii. 18, 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 19),—then residing at Rome again (Rom. xvi. 3),—and finally established once more at Ephesus (2 Tim. iv. 19), may be taken as an example of the widespread activity of modern mercantile houses, and of the way in which, by God's grace, it may be made subservient to the best of all causes.

Helpers of the Ministry

Nor is this combination of Christian wedlock and honourable trade all that meets us in the Scriptural account of Aquila and Priscilla. Notwithstanding the married state, which is elsewhere pointed out by St Paul as involving snares in a time of persecution (1 Cor. vii. 26, 28), it is evident that these wedded Christians suffered bravely together in the cause of the Gospel, while through their recorded hospitality and "the church in their house" at Rome they well deserve the thanks of "all the churches of the Gentile" (Rom. xvi. 3-5); nor must we forget their concluding association with Timothy at Ephesus (2 Tim. iv. 19), and the benefit which this comparatively young ecclesiastic would derive in his difficult post from the mature experience of a layman well acquainted with business, and (in reference to the female members of his flock) from the prudence and tact of a wise and Christian matron.

This mention of Aquila and Priscilla, and

especially the prominent position and singular efficiency of the wife, introduce us to another part of our subject which deserves our most careful attention. It is very remarkable how at each of the main points of the European part of this journey women are conspicuous in connexion with the Christian work of St Paul. At Philippi, the place where the evangelisation of Europe began, the first success was in a little congregation of women (Acts xvi. 13); and the first convert, Lydia, is a signal example of that patient listening (Acts xvi. 14),—that humility (Acts xvi. 15),—that warm hospitality,—that sympathy and usefulness (Acts xvi. 15, 40),—which are the true characteristics of the womanly piety which has been the ornament and strength of the Christian Church in every age. At Athens, where the success of the Apostolical preaching was scanty, and where only two converts are mentioned by name, a woman was one (Acts xvii. 34). And here at Corinth we have seen what Priscilla was in reference to St Paul himself and the Church at large. But she is not the only instance, or the most marked instance, of feminine administration in connexion with Corinth.

Women in the Apostolic Church

What Priscilla is as an example of the married woman in the service of Christ, Phœbe is as an example of the unmarried (Rom. xvi. 1, 2); and the way in

Phœbe

which she and her errand are mentioned seems to reveal to us a large and systematic organisation of service of this kind. She is described as officially connected with the church of Cenchreæ, which was only a subordinate part of the great Achaian church, that had its centre in Corinth. She is also sent on a long voyage, involving considerable risks, and apparently with a definite responsibility, and with large powers. She is described, too, as having been "a succourer of many, and of Paul also."

The Ministry of Women

From these circumstances it seems natural to conclude that female ministries were organised on a considerable scale in the churches planted by St Paul. This is in harmony with what we read elsewhere, especially in a passage (1 Tim. iii. 11) not correctly rendered in our English version, where the same official word is used which is applied to Phœbe, and where the character suitable to that office is laid down. And, with these facts as our starting-point, it seems not unreasonable to trace the representatives of this office in such women as Euodias and Syntyche, who had laboured (not altogether harmoniously) at Philippi (Phil. iv. 2, 3). and Tryphena and Tryphosa at Rome, whose "labour in the Lord" was continuing when the Apostle wrote (Rom. xvi. 12).

The purpose, however, of this chapter is not

to enter on any questions of ecclesiastical organisation, but simply to illustrate the widespread friendships of St Paul, and the mode in which, through them, warm human affections were made subservient to the cause of the Gospel. Our catalogue of friends of both sexes might have been made still longer. That salutation chapter at the end of the Epistle to the Romans makes honourable mention of other women,—Mary and Persis, who may have ministered to the Apostle in the time of sickness (Rom. xvi. 6, 12),—Junia and Julia, and the sister of Nereus (Rom. xvi. 7, 15),—and especially the mother of Rufus, whom he mentions with such exquisite delicacy and respect. Many other names of men too will occur to the reader, each illustrating some phase of the Apostle's experience, or some point of his character, such as Gaius (Rom. xvi. 23) and Mnason (Acts xxi. 16), who were among the hospitable entertainers of St. Paul,—Sosthenes (1 Cor. i. 1), whom he associates with himself in the opening of an apostolic letter—Stephanas (1 Cor. i. 16), whom he baptized with his own hand, and whose grateful and affectionate care was afterwards a "refreshment" to him (1 Cor. xvi. 17, 18),—Onesimus, the penitent slave of the large-hearted Philemon (Col. iv. 9; Philem. 10),—Aristarchus, the tried companion of Paul's travel (Acts xix.

Other Friends of the Apostle

29; xx. 4; xxvii. 2), and afterwards his associate in prison (Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24),—and Onesiphorus, who diligently "ministered" to the Apostle at Ephesus, and sought him out eagerly at Rome, and whose "household" receives the ever-grateful Apostle's latest blessing (2 Tim. i. 16-18; iv. 19).

The Work Sanctified of Affection

It is instructive to group all these friendships together, and, while pausing for a moment with St Paul under the shadow of the Acrocorinthus, before his final return from the second missionary circuit (Acts xviii. 18-22), to have taken this wide and general view over this vast range of affectionate correspondence, active sympathy, and practical combination in work. It is true that so much warmth of feeling, combined with such a scope of administration, can hardly be realised twice in the history of the Church. But all may learn here how large an opportunity for good is furnished by sanctified affection; and those who are in places of trust and responsibility would do well to learn here the best and most valuable secret of administrative power.

VIII

WORK IN GREAT CITIES—EPHESUS

Town and Country Compared—Association and Isolation—St Paul's Use for Great Towns—Antioch—Early Work of the Apostles—Widespread Results—Thessalonica: Its Population: Its Influence—Corinth: Its Advantages—Ephesus—Impress of Town Life—The Meeting with the Baptist's Disciples—Incomplete Knowledge Supplemented—The Influence of a Few—Self-interest and Religion—A Disastrous Influence—Put to Shame by the Faith—A Good Example—The Tumult at Ephesus—The Danger to St Paul—Friends in Need—And a Prudent Town-Clerk—A Sorrowful Parting—A Far-reaching Influence—Where to be Detected—Timothy's Surroundings — Forebodings Justified — Modern Problems and Ancient Warnings.

Town and Country Compared

The comparison between town and country is easily decided in favour of the latter, if our only standards are the enjoyment of what is fresh and beautiful, the securing of domestic comfort, and the permanence of health. But the decision is not quite so easy, if we take a moral standard and try to estimate in the two cases the facilities for spreading truth and for making a religious impression on the world.

There are many obvious disadvantages in the life of towns. Vice is presented there in more

exciting and alluring forms. A great city, like a great forest, affords opportunities of concealment, which must often act as an encouragement to sin; and while the infection of evil is intensified by the close contact of large numbers, there is an absence of that healthy personal influence, which in country neighbourhoods results from the intimate acquaintance of the higher classes and the lower: the labouring part of a dense population are too apt to be viewed by those above them merely as an aggregate of living machinery.

Association and Isolation

But still there are two sides to this question. The power of combination on a large scale affords important opportunities for good as well as for evil: this busy and active association, too, quickens the intellectual powers; and though intelligence is not religion, yet ignorance gives great facilities for delusion and superstition. The cheerful and pleasing circumstances by which a peasant population is usually surrounded, sometimes lead us to take too favourable a view of such a population itself. The dulness and coarseness of rural districts, with the occasional prevalence of even brutal habits, are found to be a lamentable hindrance to the progress of the Gospel.[1] It is by no means certain that the factory or the workshop is more hostile to religion than the farm-house or

[1] See *The Age of Great Cities* (by Dr R. Vaughan), pp. 224, 225.

the gang of labourers in the field. The case of large towns, in reference to this question, may probably be very fairly stated in St Paul's sentence (1 Cor. xvi. 9): "A great and effectual door is open, and there are many adversaries."

St Paul's Use for Great Towns

This at least must be granted in reference to populous cities, that as meeting-places of various interests and very different classes of men, and as centres of communication to remote and widely-separated districts, they give peculiar opportunities for influencing opinion, and for spreading a new doctrine far and wide. Thus, even if we take no account at all of inspiration or of special providential guidance, we feel that it was a true instinct which determined St Paul, in his work of evangelising the Jews and the heathen, to labour so diligently and to spend so long a time in crowded and important towns. "Just as in our own days any persons having some new invention to bring out, or discovery to proclaim, or opinions to propagate, would betake themselves to Paris, London, or Vienna, or at all events to the capitals of their own country, so the Apostles, naturally enough, commenced preaching and founding churches, not in hamlets or highways, but in the metropoles or chief cities of the Empire."[1]

We have had instances of this holy policy before us in the ground which has already been traversed;

[1] E. S. Ffoulkes, *Christendom's Divisions*, p. 13.

and another now invites our particular attention. But before we proceed to the details of the apostolic work at Ephesus, we may glance back again for a moment at Antioch, Thessalonica, and Corinth. All these four places were capitals of provinces, and in the very highest rank in ancient times among the cities and seaports of the Levant.

Antioch

The Syrian Antioch must always have a great name in connexion with the history of Christianity. Its outward splendour, indeed, has sunk into squalor; the noble buildings and colonnades on the Orontes have long disappeared; but it cannot be forgotten that the very name "Christian" first came into existence there (Acts xi. 26). Probably no place in apostolic times had a more corrupt and worthless population than Antioch. Combining as it did, from its very position, the elements of Oriental superstition, Greek frivolity, and Roman luxury, it might have seemed adapted to offer every discouragement to the Gospel. Yet here it is that we find the new leaven first fermenting beyond the limits of Judæa (Acts xi. 19, 20), and preparing to produce mighty results in the Gentile world (Acts xi. 26; xii. 1-3). Chrysostom, the great bishop and preacher of Antioch, who never forgets its renowned part in the first propagation of the Gospel, says that the very reason why Barnabas brought Saul to work with him there was this, "because the hopes of

success were good, and the city was great, and the population dense."[1]

Early Work of the Apostles

We find, in harmony with these expectations, that Barnabas and Saul "a whole year assembled themselves with the church in Antioch, and taught much people" (Acts xi. 26); and that again, after the close of the first missionary journey, "they gathered the church together, and rehearsed all that God had done with them, and there [at Antioch] abode long time with the disciples" (Acts xiv. 27, 28); and that once more, after the Council of Jerusalem, they "continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also" (Acts xv. 35); and once again, at the close of the second journey, that Paul, now unaided by Barnabas, "spent some time there" (Acts xviii. 23), before starting on a new campaign of suffering and conquest.

Widespread Results

Nor were the results confined to the population within the walls. To show how they radiated outwards, we have only to mention the active intercourse of Christian charity along the Phœnician coast-road between this city and Jerusalem (Acts xi. 27-30; xii. 25), together with the fact that this was the point of departure and return for St Paul's successive mission-

[1] See note in *Life and Epistles of St Paul* (8vo ed.), vol i. p. 146.

ary circuits (Acts xiii. 4; xiv. 26; xv. 40; xviii. 22, 23). And if we were to complete the whole history of this Apostolic labour in Antioch, we should be obliged to remember not only its nearness to the Mediterranean and the active Western world, but to Babylon also and the Euphrates, and its connexion with the great theological discussions of all the early Christian centuries, of which connexion we have in fact a sample in the Acts of the Apostles themselves (Acts xv. 1-30).

Thessalonica

Thessalonica too, the capital of Macedonia, has an illustrious place in regard to both the early reception and the subsequent diffusion of the Christian Religion. This large city was omitted, or at least very slightly referred to, in our notice of the Apostle's proceedings on the second missionary circuit (see above, pp. 47, 56, 72). Yet no station could be more important for the first evangelisation of Europe. It was on the line of the great Egnatian Way, along which the Apostle travelled to it from Philippi, passing through the intermediate stations of Amphipolis and Apollonia (Acts xvii. 1); and again by Berea (Acts xvii. 10) it was in easy communication with southern Greece, while by sea it had a large share of the trade of the Eastern Mediterranean. Even now it is the second town of European Turkey, and still, as in the Apostle's day, it contains a very considerable

number of Jews. It does not appear, indeed, that he made any protracted stay there on his first visit (verse 2), nor is it clear that he resided there long on his second visit (Acts xx. 1-6); but still in the short notices which are given to us we seem to see some of the characteristic features of work in great cities.

Its Population

Here, in the first place, was the chief synagogue of the district (Acts xvii. 1); the number of the Jewish proselytes was so considerable, that they are called "a great multitude (verse 4). The prominent mention, too, of the influence of "the chief women" seems to indicate a large population. We have here also the unprincipled rabble,—"the lewd fellows of the baser sort,"—who are always ready to gather a crowd and put a city "on an uproar" (verse 5); while the reference to the Roman Emperor (verse 7), is very natural in a place of political importance; and the exclamation, "these that have turned the world upside down are come hither also" (verse 6), inevitably reminds us that religious movements at Thessalonica could hardly be isolated.

Its Influence

How strongly St Paul felt this himself we see by the words addressed from Corinth to the Thessalonians, soon after he had quitted them: "From you has sounded out the word of the Lord not only in

Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad" (1 Thess. i. 8). And if another proof were needed of the widespread influence for good which may follow systematic work in a large town, we might enumerate the friends and fellow-labourers of St Paul that were connected with Thessalonica,—Jason (Acts xvii. 5-7), who may have been the Apostle's own kinsman (Rom. xvi. 21); Caius, who shared some of his perils at Ephesus (Acts xix. 29); Secundus, who accompanied him on the return from the third missionary journey (Acts xx. 4); Aristarchus, who was his companion on the voyage to Rome (Acts xix. 29; xx. 4; xxvii. 2); and probably Demas, who, whatever may have been the degree of his defection at the last (2 Tim. iv. 10), certainly did good service at an earlier period (Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24).

Corinth

CORINTH is the third great city which was to be noticed as a wisely-chosen scene of the Apostle's labours. Even the mention of such names as Apollos, Aquilla and Priscilla, Timotheus and Silas, Phœbe, Fortunatus and Achaicus, illustrate the point before us. But a glance at the geographical position of Corinth, and even a cursory recollection of its historical eminence, suffice to show that the founding of a flourishing church on this spot would produce both immediate and lasting results. It was the

part of true wisdom to reside so long in this capital of Achaia, and to keep up assiduous communication with it afterwards. When Paul established himself there at the first, "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling," as he tells us himself (1 Cor. ii. 3), a vision was vouchsafed to him, which gave him the most distinct expectation of wide success: "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace," said his Divine Master; "for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" (Acts xviii. 9-11); and again afterwards, on the subsequent journey through Europe, he "abode three months" in the same neighbourhood (Acts xx. 2, 3).

It need hardly be remarked how the Epistles to the Corinthians imply a large and vigorous community, in which both good and evil are actively working, and contain allusions to the mental activity, the wealth, the profligacy, the party-spirit, which are all among the characteristics of a populous city. Moreover, "the political position of Corinth, which naturally drew the steps of the Apostle to its walls, lends a special interest to the two Epistles addressed to its inhabitants. When labouring there, he was labouring not merely for Corinth, but for the great people of which it was now the representative; the Epistles which he wrote to the Christians

Its Advantages

of Corinth were in fact—as is implied in the opening of the second (2 Cor. i. 1)—Epistles to the whole Greek nation: they included within their range not merely Corinth the capital, but Athens the university of Greece; and spoke not only to those who had listened to him in the house of Justus or the synagogue of Crispus, but to those who had heard him beneath the shade of the Acropolis or on the rock-hewn seats of the Areopagus."[1]

Ephesus

We now turn to Ephesus. But here we must remember that we are in the third apostolical journey. This place is taken as our single representative of the whole of what occurred on that circuit. And, indeed, the interest of the whole is by the sacred historian himself concentrated on this capital of Asia. It is evident that St Paul had earnestly desired long before to preach the Gospel in this populous province and its famous metropolis (Acts xvi. 6, 7), feeling, doubtless, that success in such a district and such a city would be no small achievement in the progressive work of evangelising the world. But he had been hindered, either by providential obstacles or (as seems distinctly implied) by express intimations from above. He had, however, been permitted, on his return from the second circuit, just to touch at Ephesus, and to make an encourag-

[1] Dean Stanley on the *Epistles to the Corinthians*, Introd. p. 3.

ing commencement of some effort for Christ (Acts xviii. 19-21). For the moment he was under the pressure of haste to attend a festival at Jerusalem; but he gladly made the promise, "I will return again unto you, if God will." And now he was enabled to fulfil that promise. The Syrian Antioch became his starting-point as before (verse 22). He passed through Galatia and Phrygia (verse 23), moved on to his main point without hindrance (Acts xix. 1), and began his labours in the midst of the wealth and superstition, and under the eye of the political authorities, of Ephesus, spending first "three months" with the Jewish Synagogue as his centre (verse 8), and then "two years" among the Gentiles with the lecture-hall of a Heathen philosopher or rhetorician as his place of public teaching (verses 9, 10), and labouring with so much diligence, that he could afterwards call on the Ephesian elders to "remember that by the space of three years he had ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts xx. 31).

Impress of Town Life

All that we read of this residence in Ephesus wears the characteristic impress of work in great cities. We might trace this even in the language of that letter which, during this residence, he wrote to Corinth. And this close proximity and easy intercourse of two populous cities, both capitals of rich and

flourishing provinces on opposite sides of the Ægean, both scenes of prolonged apostolic labour, is a point not to be lost sight of. It is not easy to read the letter without thinking of both places. If the allusions to the foot-race, the chaplet of green leaves, the training for the athletic contests (1 Cor. ix. 24-27), remind us of the Isthmian games at Corinth—the architectural metaphors, the lessons drawn from a building patiently raised on a firm foundation, the distinction between sheds of timber thatched with straw and solid structures of marble and granite decorated with gold (1 Cor. iii. 9-17), seem more appropriate to Ephesus, where the temple of Diana, rising in bright and strong magnificence among the hovels of the poor, was one of the wonders of the world. But from the direct narrative in the Acts of the Apostles we may select one or two incidents, which are illustrative of the general topic chosen for this paper, and full of instruction to those who are called to serve Christ in the midst of the concourse of men.

The Meeting with the Baptist's Disciples

And first, we may mention—as a specimen of the way in which various sections of mankind come together for good or for evil in these large aggregates of population—the meeting with the disciples of John the Baptist (Acts xix. 1-7). The effect of John's preaching was so great, that we may well suppose Jews to have been dispersed through the

Empire, who, many years afterwards, had reached no higher level, and had received no fuller religious knowledge than he had been commissioned to impart. St Paul met "twelve" men in this condition at Ephesus. It is useless to speculate on the circumstances which may have brought these men there; but this meeting-point of all trades and all opinions is just the place where we should expect to find them.

Incomplete Knowledge Supplemented

The facts recorded here by St Luke exemplify the blessing which attends the possession of even imperfect religious knowledge, if it is apprehended with an honest and humble desire to learn more. They exemplify also the Apostle's diligent use of opportunities. He would hardly have found these men, unless he had been carefully searching for the germs of faith. He neither despised the ignorance of these half-taught disciples, nor thought it unimportant to remove it. He rejoiced in the opportunity of completing a gracious work begun by others long before, and he patiently used, in order to bring them to a riper knowledge, the same efforts which he devoted to the task of planting the Gospel in new ground.

The Influence of a Few

Nor was this kind of labour of trivial moment even in regard to fresh missionary enterprise. A small company of Christians, well and systematically instructed, in

the midst of a moving and busy population, are a steady light which cannot be concealed. How much good may possibly have resulted from the meeting of St Paul and these disciples we may conjecture from the case of Apollos, who was in fact in the same condition, when he became acquainted with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts xviii. 25, 26). He was both fervent in spirit and teachable in disposition; and his labours, after he was fully instructed, were largely blessed in Achaia. And thus also (we can hardly doubt, from the particularity with which this case is mentioned) these twelve disciples "knowing only the baptism of John," became, under Paul's teaching, if we may use the expression, like "twelve apostles" in the province of Asia.

Self-interest and Religion

Another characteristic occurrence, recorded in the narrative of St Paul's labours at Ephesus, presents to us this city in a less favourable view. We see in the proceedings which led to the tumult an instance of the way in which self-interest contrives to connect itself with religion, and how even an organised system may grow up, giving the shelter and sanction of a respectable name to what is really contemptible and degrading. Demetrius, the silversmith, "which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain to the craftsmen" (Acts xix. 24), and he had no scruple, when he had called

his workmen together, in addressing them thus: "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth" (verse 25), adding, that through the influence of Paul's preaching in the city and neighbourhood "their craft was in danger to be set at nought" (verses 26, 27). We read in the Epistles of certain men of "corrupt minds and destitute of the truth," who suppose that "godliness is gain" (1 Tim. vi. 5); and (leaving out the question of heathenism and idolatry as immaterial to our present purpose) we may use Demetrius and his craftsmen to point a lesson useful to all times, and especially to an age of populous cities.

A Disastrous Influence

With the multiplication of numbers a wider ramification and increased strength are given to the low moral influences which sway public opinion. We are not indeed here speaking of (what is too common) a corrupt standard of mercantile morality, not of undisguised selfishness or conventional fraud. It is the greed or ambition which deceives itself and shelters itself under the name of Religion,—or the bitter hatred which identifies itself with Zeal,—this it is which receives its rebuke from the present passage of Holy Scripture. When a man is devoted to the sordid pursuit of wealth, and prides himself on the example set by his orderly habits, self-restraint, and frugality—or adds his name to a subscription list, ostensibly that he may

influence others, but really that he may be admired for his charity—or decorously resists innovations of doctrine, but only lest his own ease should be disturbed—or seeks selfishly for a higher post in life under the specious plea of obtaining a wider sphere of usefulness—or connives at the use of slander for the upholding of a religious party supposed to be essential for the maintenance of some great principle,—such a man is not on the side of the Gospel, but against it. To all such hypocrisies and delusions Christianity must oppose itself.

Put to Shame by the Faith

What Christianity can do in correcting the meanness of self-interest and turning it to a noble generosity, was shown in another scene during the residence of the Apostle at Ephesus. This city was notorious for the prevalence of magic; and magic was there so completely reduced to a system, that its rules were arranged and recorded in books. It seems that some of those who embraced Christianity still continued the study and practice of this dark and mischievous art (Acts xix. 18): but the remarkable miracles which St Paul was enabled to work in the name of Jesus Christ (verses 11, 16) acted powerfully on their consciences; they felt the direct presence and pressure of a Higher Power, and "came and confessed" and "brought their books together and burnt them before all men" (Acts xix. 18, 19). Here was not only an honest

and fearless confession of truth, but a mark of high and disinterested regard for the welfare of others. These books had a value in the market—indeed, their value is stated in the narrative, and considerable stress is laid on this point. The owners might have sold them to others and applied to religious purposes the money so obtained. But these good Ephesian Christians saw through the fallacy of the argument which suggests such a proceeding.

A Good Example

It would be well if conscience were always as considerate and prompt in modern society in regard to the retention and circulation of bad books. Such resolute self-denial and such considerate care for the spiritual well-being of others would be both an encouraging proof of the present reality of Christian life and a sure guarantee of the future advance of the power of the Gospel. The comment of the sacred historian upon this single transaction at Ephesus is very significant: "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (verse 20).

The Tumult at Ephesus

Another part of the narrative which attracts our attention in the same point of view, is the account of the tumult itself. Never was so vivid a description of a riot given in so few words. Demetrius is the perfect type of the consummate demagogue, cleverly touching the springs of selfishness,

and exciting the most violent passions while he flatters his audience by giving them credit for honourable motives. Presently "they were full of wrath, and the whole city was filled with confusion" (verses 28, 29). With fanatical violence they dragged St Paul's companions into the theatre. The disturbance grew continually greater, and new crowds flocked to the place. But the majority "knew not wherefore they were come together; some, therefore, cried one thing and some another." The very way in which Alexander is mentioned (verse 33) seems to reflect the confusion of the scene. It is difficult to conjecture why the Jews "put him forward." It is as if (to us, while we read) the uproar of the crowd would not let us hear his speech, and left us in the dark. The confused feeling found utterance in their national cry, "Great is Diana"; and this, when they knew that Alexander was a Jew, they "all with one voice" proceeded to vociferate "about the space of two hours" (verse 34).

The Danger to St Paul

The danger to St Paul was great, and would probably have been fatal, if he had not been rescued by friends. He may well speak of the crisis as a "fighting with wild beasts" (1 Cor. xv. 32); and of his safety as a deliverance "from death" (2 Cor. i. 10). The short and simple statement that "when Paul would have entered in to the people, the disciples suffered him not" (Acts xix. 30), is a passage on which we

should pause; for it reveals very forcibly both their affection and his peril.

Here we are introduced to another and a better side of the social condition of a populous city. If a large community exposes the cause of religion to peculiar trials, it also, in the very nature of things, affords a wider opportunity for securing the support of influential friends; and it often happens that even those who are not religious conceive so great a respect for honest advocates of the truth (especially when the manner is as conciliatory as the principle is firm) as to shelter them, in time of danger, from injustice and harm. It is certainly very striking to see the "chiefs of Asia," or the Asiarchs, who were officers appointed to superintend the public games, appearing on the scene as the "friends" of St Paul, and sending to him an earnest message, "desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre" (verse 31).

Friends in Need

But more than this. If crowded cities afford opportunity to bad leaders for exciting large masses of people to fanaticism and turbulence, it is in such communities that we see the highest exercise of the moral power of good judgment and of law. The town-clerk at Ephesus is a pattern of a wise and discreet magistrate. His dignified and sagacious address, calling attention to the absence of real ground for com-

And a Prudent Town-Clerk

plaint, and to the presence of governors and assemblies, before which justice could always be obtained (verses 35-41), had the immediate effect of allaying the tumult and dispersing the rabble. What a gracious gift of God is the power of a wise government, which upholds law and order against caprice and injustice! Paul here experienced in reality what he said in praise of the appointed institution of governing power. It became "the minister of God" unto him "for good" (Rom. xiii. 4).

A Sorrowful Parting

But with the dispersing of the multitude and with St Paul's departure for Macedonia (Acts xx. 1) we have not altogether exhausted his labours in connexion with Ephesus. He was not indeed able to stay there again on his return to Jerusalem (verse 6), but he adopted a course which shows his sense of the importance of the Christian work at Ephesus, and gives also a proof of the thorough manner in which its church had been organised. He sent for the elders of that church to meet him in the harbour of Miletus (verse 17). And we gather from the affecting address which he made to them there some further indications of what his labours in that crowded population had been, and what those ought to do who under similar circumstances are treading in his footsteps. We see his patient perseverance in service in the midst of plots and

sufferings and fears (Acts xx. 19, 23). We see that the presence of a multitude did not hinder his affectionate and unceasing pursuit of individuals (verse 31). We see him not only making public addresses, but visiting diligently "from house to house," and combining pastoral work with the office of the preacher (verses 20, 25). We see him rebuking the avarice and luxury of the wealthy by his own frugality and self-denying industry (verses 34, 35). We see also his sense of the dangers of such a community, his anticipation of "the wolves" that would come in upon "the flock" (verse 29), and of the heresy and disunion that would arise from within (verse 30). Where can we find such an example of the faithful serious, enlightened, indefatigable pastor?

A Far-reaching Influence

Nor again does the Christian interest and example of this great city terminate even here. The holy influence went forth from it extensively both in space and time. The narrative itself shows how it was made a centre of evangelisation for all the surrounding regions. Not only did the power of Christ become "known to all the Jews and Greeks dwelling at Ephesus" (Acts xix. 17), but "all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (verse 10); and we see in the apprehension of Demetrius that in consequence of the preaching of St Paul, Diana

would suffer a world-wide discredit, a standard by which we can measure the probable effects of that preaching.

Where to be Detected

How often and how far the Apostle may have itinerated, with this city as a starting-point, we cannot tell. But even without leaving it at all, he necessarily preached the Gospel to the neighbourhood. Philemon may have been converted by the Apostle at Ephesus (Philem. 19); but he did not reside there; and the letter to that disciple is one of the weightiest proofs of the wide benefit which may result from one single conversion. It would seem that the Apostle had not himself (at least at this period) visited Colossæ (Col. ii. 1); but through him, probably by the agency of Epaphras (Col. i. 7; iv. 12), Christianity had penetrated to that city; and in the Epistle addressed to it we can trace both the well-ordered institutions on the one hand (Col. ii. 5), and the dangers of heresy on the other (verse 8), which are the light and the shade of every large Christian Church.

Timothy's Surroundings

What was true of Colossæ was probably true also of its neighbouring cities, Laodicea and Hierapolis (Col. ii. 1; iv. 13, 15, 16); while in the Epistle to the Ephesians itself we have apparently a circular letter addressed to all the Christian communities of the province of Asia. Nor does the fruit of

pastoral work end with the presence, or even with the life, of the pastor. We must not forget that Timotheus,—possibly himself the "angel" who is first addressed in the letters to the seven churches (Rev. ii. 1),—was appointed to "abide" at Ephesus (1 Tim. i. 3) to continue and consolidate the work which St Paul had begun; and it is not difficult, while reading the Epistles addressed to him there to observe how the circumstances surrounding him are similar to those which surrounded the Apostle in the same place.

Some features, indeed, whether good or bad, of the community with which he was concerned, may easily be common to town and country: such as the hospitality shown to strangers on the one hand (1 Tim. v. 10), or the love of idle gossip on the other (verse 13). But there are some points which harmonise better with the crowded metropolis than the rural district, as for instance the enumeration of "slave-dealers" and other criminals who were found in large numbers in the great eastern cities of the Roman Empire (1 Tim. i. 9, 10), the injunction to pray for those who have the responsibility of controlling the population by good government (1 Tim. ii. 2), the rebuke of fashion and of the "broided hair or gold or pearls or costly array," which did no honour to Christian profession (verse 9), the strong mention of the dangers and duties connected with the possession

of wealth (1 Tim. vi. 9, 17), as also the tendency to foolish controversy and bitter party-spirit (1 Tim. vi. 4, 20; 2 Tim. ii. 23).

Forebodings Justified

We see very clearly here some of the fulfilment of the Apostle's forebodings at Ephesus. The "turning away of those in Asia" for himself (2 Tim. i. 15) is painfully contrasted with the warm and firm friendship of an earlier time. The mischievous opposition of Alexander (1 Tim. i. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 14, 15), and the ruinous heresy of Hymenæus (1 Tim. i. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18), who took the fact of the Resurrection out of the Christian Creed, showed too seriously how error was gaining ground. And the inspired Apostle has still to reiterate in the most solemn manner his prophetic warning of increasing corruption, both in doctrine and in morals (1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 1-7; iv. 3, 4)—a warning too sadly fulfilled, as is well known to all who have studied the subsequent history of the Church of Ephesus, and, indeed, it must be added, the history of the Church in all ages and all countries. Not that so serious a prospect is to hinder the present duty, either of Timotheus or of ourselves. The God who permits evil can also restrict it (2 Tim. iii. 9), and has His gracious times of recovery and improvement. True though it is that bad doctrine and bad morals have a tendency to "eat as doth a canker" (2

Tim. ii. 17), still it is the part of every faithful section of Christendom, in every successive age, to be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," and the things that have been "received" in the Scripture from the Apostles, "the same to commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (verses 1, 2).

Modern Problems and Ancient Warnings

Our age too is an age of great cities. Never, in fact, since the history of the human race began, has a century been so strongly marked by this characteristic. The nearest approach to it was that very period of the highest development of the Roman empire, in which our Apostle was providentially appointed to labour. We may surely expect, as the distinguishing features of our age become larger and more strongly marked, that some lessons of the Acts of the Apostles and of the biography of St Paul will be more fully learnt than they have ever been learnt before. Evils of vast magnitude, sudden outbreaks of violence, corruption subtle, and pervading, and perplexing, these things must be looked for.

But this subject has a bright side as well as a dark one. Great cities give opportunities for good on a grander scale—furnish occasions for the development of the highest moral qualities—are a centre for the widest diffusion of evangelical truth

and a strong foundation for the building up of the faith and practice of future times. The history of man began in a paradise (Gen. ii. 15) which was speedily lost (Gen. iii. 23); but "citizenship" is the image under which St Paul presents our Christian condition (Phil. iii. 20; Eph. ii. 19); and the happiness of the redeemed is to be consummated in "a Great City," containing "the glory and honour of the nations" (Rev. xxi. 10, 26).

IX

ST PAUL BEFORE THE MULTITUDE—JERUSALEM

St Paul in Prison—The Tumult at Jerusalem: Its Cause—The Case of Trophimus—St Paul's Action: misunderstood—The Beginning of the Uproar—The Violence of the Mob—The Demand of the Mob—The Appeal of St Paul—The Violence of Fanaticism—The Apostle's Speech—Its Discretion and Courtesy—Its Fairness and Forbearance—Inspired by Humility: and by Love for his People: a Love Elsewhere Manifest—Farewell to Jerusalem—His First Visit—Subsequent Visits: and the Last—Stephen Remembered.

St Paul in Prison

On returning from the third missionary journey St Paul received a sudden check, and was condemned to a long intermission of his active labours. Two years were taken (as we should say) out of the best and most useful part of his life; and the greater portion of this time he was forced to spend in prison. Yet the circumstances of this period are set before us in very minute detail; and the particularity of the sacred narrative at this point invites us to dwell upon it with serious attention. The interchanges in the Bible from what is general to what is particular, from what is cursory to what is elaborately minute, are not capricious or arbitrary,

not for the purposes of mere artistic or picturesque effect: the Holy Spirit has selected what is best for the edification of all future ages of the Church, and the thoughtful and reverent mind gratefully follows this guidance. As in the Gospels the minuteness and length of the narratives of the Passion show us the supreme importance we are to attach to the sufferings and death of Christ, so, in a lower degree, from the Acts of the Apostles at this place we receive an admonition that we have much to learn from the events connected with St Paul's arrest at Jerusalem and imprisonment at Cæsarea.

The Tumult at Jerusalem

Two scenes have been selected as illustrations of this important period of the Apostle's life. The first occasion shows him face to face with an excited multitude. To some extent this was the case on the last occasion when we saw him in a heathen city (Acts xix. See p. 157). At Ephesus, indeed, he was preserved through the intervention of friends, from coming into actual collision with the mob. Here he is brought into direct contact with all its fury, and for a time he turns it into an attentive audience. As before we have seen Christianity in the person of St Paul face to face with uncivilised heathenism and educated heathenism, with Roman power, Greek art, and Jewish tradition (See Nos. III., IV., V., VI.), so now we see it in its apostolic dealings with the angry passions of a crowd.

The occurrence which led to this uproar is a characteristic specimen of the way in which such tumults frequently arise, and at the same time a good illustration of the mischief which may come amongst ourselves, on a much smaller scale, from a propensity to gossip. First, a mistake is made as to fact—that which is supposed to be likely is assumed to be true; then the assumed fact is developed and exaggerated in its proportions; thus passions are rapidly and violently excited, and no one can predict the harm which may ensue. Trophimus was "an Ephesian," a Greek (Acts xxi. 29), whom we have seen before (see p. 129), among the companions of St Paul at the time of the voyage by Miletus (Acts xx. 4, 16, 17)—and the return was so rapid and direct from that coast to Jerusalem, first by Cos, Rhodes, and Patara (Acts xxi. 1), and then by Tyre, Ptolemais, and Cæsarea (verses 3, 7, 8), that we need not dwell at all upon the details. This Ephesian Greek had accompanied the Apostle throughout, and had been seen with him in the streets of the Holy City by some Asian Jews who were acquainted with his appearance.

Its Cause

The Case of Trophimus

It was easy to rush to the conclusion that St Paul had taken this Gentile into the Temple itself; and it was equally easy, as the next step,

to generalise this assumed occurrence, and with all the vehemence of outraged religious feeling to "cry out: Men of Israel, help! This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the Law, and this place; and further brought Greeks also into the Temple, and hath polluted this holy place" (verse 28).

St Paul's Action

The way in which St Paul had been engaged in that "holy place" might have been supposed likely to conciliate rather than to offend, likely to keep him in safety rather than to expose him to danger. Knowing the deep attachment to the Jewish law, which still prevailed among the Hebrew Christians, and the suspicion and prejudice which had been caused among the Judaisers by St Paul's free communication of the Gospel to the Gentiles (verses 20, 21), St James and the elders of the church in Jerusalem had advised him to endeavour to disarm the opposition by publicly associating himself with certain Nazarites in the Temple, and taking part in the necessary ceremonial and expenses (verses 20-24). This advice the Apostle had gladly followed, in accordance with his settled principle of becoming, within the limits of what is innocent, "all things to all men" (1 Cor. ix. 22), and knowing that if "circumcision is nothing," "uncircumcision" also is "nothing," but that "faith working by love," and "the keeping of the command-

ments of God" are everything (1 Cor. vii. 19; Gal. v. 6; vi. 15).

—Misunderstood

But these very precautions led to a sudden outbreak of danger. What was meant to pacify the Judaisers became the occasion of infuriating the Jews. Theological hatred, even while it slumbers, is like a pile of dry fuel, ready for a spark to kindle. Or, to use another comparison, St Paul was at this moment in the condition in which we shall hereafter see him during the voyage to Rome. The sailors "supposed they had obtained their purpose"; the harbour was in sight, and "the south wind blew softly"; when suddenly "the "tempestuous Euroclydon" came down on the ship and carried all before it (Acts xxvii. 12-15).

The Beginning of the Uproar

This disturbance at Jerusalem is described in the same vivid manner as the disturbance at Ephesus. The difference is, that one is a Jewish, the other a Heathen mob; and this we are called very carefully to observe. We can trace from first to last all the rough features of an excited multitude, as an eye-witness would naturally delineate them. First, we have the fact, which was noticed before, that the whole disturbance originated in a mistake. Next, we have the rapid confluence of people, finding their way from all parts of the town, as by some wild instinct, to the centre of excitement. "All

the city was moved, and the people ran together; all Jerusalem was in an uproar" (Acts xxi. 30, 32).

The Violence of the Mob

Next, we notice the irrational violence of the mob. We need not inquire whether the dragging of Paul out of the Temple-court and the shutting of the gates were intended to deprive him of the right of sanctuary, or rather to preserve the sacred precincts from being polluted with bloodshed. On the former view we see the murderous determination of the multitude; on the latter we see how in a time of excitement conscience can delude itself by cherishing a scruple during the commission of a crime.

The Demand of the Mob

But now we observe another point, eminently characteristic of the cowardice of a mob. Intelligence of what was passing went up rapidly to the Roman barracks in the tower of Antonia, which was close above the Temple, and the commanding officer and some soldiers came down "immediately" to the scene of disorder; "and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul" (verses 31, 32). This momentary check is followed (now that their victim is rescued from their murderous hands) by impotent expressions of rage, by pressing and crowding on the stair which led from the Temple-court to the barracks (so that the Apostle was lifted off his feet and was

ST. PAUL'S APOLOGY AT JERUSALEM.
(ACTS XXII, 22.)

"borne of the soldiers"), and by furious yells and cries, "Away with him! away with him!" (Acts xxi. 35, 36).

The Appeal of St Paul

And now a new turn was unexpectedly given to the scene. The Apostle, after a few hurried words with the officer, turned round suddenly, at the very top of the stair, to address the multitude (verses 37-40). They were startled by this surprise and by eager expectation into a sudden silence (verse 40); and when this man, whom they had accused of taking Greeks into the Temple, began to speak to them in their own Hebrew tongue, the silence became deeper, and a solemn lull came over the storm which had lately been raging with ungovernable fury (Acts xxii. 2). This was Paul's golden opportunity. He used it well; and for a time they listened to him, as he skilfully held them at bay, and earnestly pressed upon them the claims of the Gospel, and the evidence of his mission. But the truth, to which his speech necessarily led, was this,—that the Gospel was free to all the world, that his mission was to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. When this was explicitly stated, it was more than they could bear.

The Violence of Fanaticism

Again there was an outburst of furious fanaticism. They clamoured for the blood of their enemy in nearly the same words as those which had been used in the same

city on a still more solemn occasion (verse 22. See John xix. 15). They "cast off their outer garments," as showing that they would gladly stone the Apostle, if they could; and to this gesture they added, like a true Oriental mob, the throwing of "dust into the air" (verse 23), which is still in Persia a customary mode of expressing hatred and contempt.[1] But St Paul was now safe in the hands of the Roman soldiers; and it was partly the consciousness of this which added new violence to the rage of the Jews. Their next course was to adopt the dark and insidious method of conspiracy (Acts xxiii. 12-15). But to that part of the history we must not now proceed.

The Apostle's Speech

This moment, when Paul stood with the Roman chains on his hand at the head of the Temple-stairs, face to face with the multitude, is so striking and significant, that it is worthy of all our attention. We have spoken of the audience: let us now consider the preacher. If we have had on the one side all the characteristics of an unreasoning mob, we have on the other side all the characteristics of a calm, prompt, and wise Christianity. The speech was full of the most intense earnestness of feeling and affection, and yet was strictly and closely argu-

[1] Hackett's *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (2nd ed.), p. 366.

mentative; and from the nature of the occasion, it was necessarily compressed into the narrowest possible compass; for though Paul was not now in actual danger, it was only by discreet management that he could command their continued attention. If we bear all this in mind, and remember likewise the agitating circumstances of the scene, the narrowness of his recent escape, and the bodily pain which he was at the moment suffering, we cannot too much admire the combination of wisdom and love displayed in this address.

Its Discretion and Courtesy

In the first place we note the singular discretion shown by the Apostle in the choice both of his topics and his language, so as to avoid all that might be irritating to his audience, and to keep them listening as long as he could. We can trace this throughout the speech from point to point, not only in what he says but in what he omits; and it illustrates the important truth, that self-possession on an emergency is one of the excellent features of Christian character.[1] Another mark of this address, which indeed is closely connected with the former mark, and hardly to be separated from it, is the courtesy which the Apostle uses. He speaks to his hearers

[1] A reference may be allowed here to a sermon, where all this is drawn out in detail. See *Hulsean Lectures on the Character of St Paul* (2nd ed.), pp. 20-30.

respectfully, calls them "brethren and fathers," and makes his "defence" before them with as much exactitude as if they constituted a lawful assembly (Acts xxii. 1).

Its Fairness and Forbearance

Then we should notice the fairness and forbearance with which he speaks. There is no exaggeration in his language. But there is more here than mere fairness and forbearance. What could exceed the generosity of tone which pervades the whole speech? It is the spirit which found expression on another occasion, when he was arguing with Jews, and when he said (forgetting all the persecution he had suffered), "Not that I have ought to accuse my nation of" (Acts xxviii. 19).

Inspired by Humility

The secret of all this absence of irritation, this singular persuasiveness in the Apostle's language, is to be found in his deep humility and his intense love for the souls of his brethren. We cannot fail to observe, as regards himself, how meekly he confesses his sin. He frankly sets forth his guilt in its most aggravated form (and no method could be so effectual for bringing them to the consciousness of their own guilt, which was identically the same) in persecuting "unto the death" the saints of God, and in persistent enmity to "Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts xxii. 4, 8, 19). While on the other hand, as regards them, we

read in his words all the tenderness of the most anxious longing for their salvation.

—And by Love for his People

They were his own kindred: they had rejected Christ: yet now perchance they had one more opportunity of becoming reconciled through "that Just One" to the "God of their fathers" (Acts xxii. 14). It is the earnest pleading of God's prophet with the Chosen People in their latest moments of rebellion and hardness of heart. "Though the Apostle keenly felt that the whole national life of Israel was in a state of deep and extensive corruption and decay, yet his love is unchanged, he does not therefore give up and separate himself from this people. Yea, at the last moment, before parting for ever, the possibility of averting this painful separation springs up to him. Even when he has to taste the whole hatred and wickedness of the Jews, he holds fast the hope of Israel's conversion."[1] We can see how his heart, while he speaks, is full of Jerusalem. Something of this is surely to be traced in his allusion to his boyish days, to his first coming to the Holy City, to Gamaliel, and to his own early zeal (verse 3). And still more is this evident in the stress laid on his return to the city after he had become a Christian, on his vision in the Temple, and his eager desire to testify of his new Master on that sacred ground (verses 17-21).

[1] Baumgarten, vol. iii. pp. 3, 6.

—A Love elsewhere Manifest

The limits, indeed, for the manifestation of this feeling on the present occasion were very narrow. But we know what he does say, when he can pour out his heart on this subject without constraint and without interruption. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. ix. 1-5).

Farewell to Jerusalem

The scene soon passes from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, from the city of the Jewish worship and Jewish law to the city of Roman governors and Roman soldiers. But let us pause for a moment on this thought, that we see St Paul here for the last time in Jerusalem. He is already in closest contact with the Roman world, and just about to be dislodged for ever from the dearest home of his Jewish ancestors. And the very position where he stands, with one foot, as it were, in the Hebrew temple, and the other foot in the Gentile barrack, marks this moment of

transition with the sharpest emphasis. Long had his life been preparing for this change. Yet never had Jerusalem been forgotten for Babylon (Ps. cxxxvii. 5, 6).

His First Visit

It is instructive to recall the various occasions of his revisiting the Holy City from the time when he became a Christian, and to note the afflictions which met him there, and the circumstances which prevented him from prolonged exertions there in the cause of the Gospel.[1] The first time he was received with suspicion by the Christians themselves (Acts ix. 26); and great must have been the trial to one who was himself disposed to place such generous trust in others. Earnestly, too, as he desired to bear witness on the very spot where he had been conspicuous as a persecutor, he was peremptorily called to a speedy departure, both by outward circumstances (verses 29, 30), and by direct admonition (Acts xxii. 18-21).

Subsequent Visits

The next visit was on an errand of charity in regard to temporal things (Acts xi. 30; xii. 25), and the occasion does not seem to have admitted of much effort in regard to directly spiritual work. The next was at a time of anxious controversy (Acts xv.; Gal. ii.), when great principles were in jeopardy, and when

[1] All this is well brought out by a Dutch writer, Dr Beets, in his *Paulus*, ch. viii. See the German translation, pp. 208-218.

there does not appear to have been opportunity for the happier task of patiently presenting the Gospel to the hearts of sinners, as had been abundantly done in Antioch and other cities. Nor does the visit at the close of the second missionary journey seem to have been more than transient (Acts xviii. 22), though his desire to spend the "feast" in Jerusalem had doubtless been entertained partly for the sake of the facilities for diffusing truth which a large concourse of men would afford.

—And the Last

And now on this last occasion, when no pressure of haste is seen on the face of the narrative, all hope of obtaining a hearing through conciliation had failed, he had been cruelly misunderstood, and treated with the utmost violence and scorn. Yet now at the latest moment it seemed as if Jerusalem were listening to him. The hope, however, was soon too rudely dispelled. It was made too evident (and for the last time) that the Jews in Jerusalem would "not receive his testimony concerning Christ" (Acts xxii. 18).

Stephen Remembered

Vividly and solemnly must the form of the first martyr have come before his memory during these events. He mentioned Stephen with deep feeling in his speech (verse 20), and presently, after the example of Stephen, he was to stand before the Sanhedrim (Acts xxiii. 1), and to be treated with equal in-

justice. Possibly some element of retribution for his guilt was mingling here with the events that were now occurring. The course of God's providence, while opening out new paths of usefulness for the converted and sanctified sinner, does not preclude severe reminiscences of past sin, but very much the contrary.

We do wisely to dwell on the personal feelings of this moment, while we remember that, as regards the historical development of the Gospel-kingdom, Paul's work was now passing entirely away from Palestine to take the world for its field. Everything on this memorable occasion proclaimed that the change was come, and that the final catastrophe of the Jewish people was impending. Paul was virtually in Rome when he made "his first and last speech to the people of Israel in Jerusalem."

X

ST PAUL BEFORE RULERS—CÆSAREA

St Paul at Cæsarea—The City and Harbour—The Vestibule of Rome—Testimony before Rulers—Lysias and St Paul—Lysias Perplexed: St Paul Self-possessed—Lysias Afraid: St Paul Confident—Lysias Prevaricates—St Paul and Felix—Attack and Defence—The Reputation of Felix—The Slave Peeps Out: in Curiosity: in Fear: and in Greed—The Worth of Imprisonment—Festus—His Procedure—His Self-satisfaction—His Delay—Agrippa and Bernice—Agrippa's Exclamation—St Paul's Reply—The Opportunity Lost—Drusilla—Bernice—A Contrast.

St Paul at Cæsarea

Cæsarea on the Sea is, next after Jerusalem, the most prominently mentioned city in the pages of the New Testament. It was indeed less ancient than Corinth or Ephesus, or even than Antioch or Thessalonica. Only about twenty years before the Christian era it was built and named in honour of the Roman emperor on a part of the coast of Palestine where merely a tower and a poor village had existed before. But the new city rapidly grew to be a place of large population and of no inconsiderable renown. Its magnificent harbour became the usual place of approach and departure for travellers to and from the Holy Land

The City and Harbour

(Acts xviii. 22; xxv. 1; xxvii. 1, 2). The seat of government (Acts xxiii. 23, 33; xxv. 13), and the place where the largest military force of the country was quartered (Acts x. 1; xxv. 23), it was connected by good roads with Jerusalem and the interior (Acts xxiii. 31-33) and also (along the coast line) with Ptolemais and all the north in one direction (Acts xxi. 7, 8), and Joppa and Egypt in the other (Acts x. 5, 8, 23, 24). The greatness, however, of Cæsarea decayed almost as rapidly as it rose. In the course of a very few centuries it passed altogether out of the field of history: and now that city which in St Paul's day was the most eminent and magnificent in Palestine is a mere collection of utter ruins on a desolate shore. It might seem as if these buildings had been raised up to be the scene of impressive Biblical Histories. All their chief interest is connected with the family of the Herods, and with those Roman governors under whom the Jews were provincials.

Two portions of these Cæsarean annals are conspicuous in the Acts of the Apostles—first that which is associated with St Peter and Cornelius, and the death of Herod Agrippa I.—next that in which St Paul is the chief figure in conjunction with Felix and Festus and Herod Agrippa II. It is of course the latter with which we are at present concerned.

The interest then of our narrative passes now

from Jerusalem to Cæsarea,—as soon it is to pass onwards from thence to Rome. In fact, Cæsarea, in reference to the transactions in St Paul's life which are now before us, may almost be viewed (in true harmony with its name and character) as the vestibule to Rome. All the events from the arrest in the Temple to the Voyage and Shipwreck may be said to wear a peculiarly Roman impress. The words spoken to the Apostle (Acts xxiii. 11) in an interval of calm and quiet, during the exciting events at Jerusalem, — "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me at Jerusalem, so must thou testify also at Rome" —might almost be taken as a text for our present remarks.

The Vestibule of Rome

With these words before us we should not fail to observe that St Paul had not been unrewarded in the midst of his conflicts and trials at Jerusalem. He may indeed have had success of which we know nothing even in the hearts of many of that multitude whom he addressed in the Temple-court (Acts xxii. 1-22) or even some of the members of the High Sanhedrim before whom he was brought the next day (Acts xxiii. 1-10). But however this might be, he had a soldier's true reward, "the praise of Him who had chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim. ii. 4). His Captain's own voice

Testimony before Rulers

approved his faithfulness in what had seemed to be a losing battle, and nerved him for the new conflicts that awaited him. One part of that Master's earlier words (Mark xiii. 9) had been fulfilled in him. He had been called to stand before "Councils." He was now to fulfil the other part of the prophecy, and on several successive occasions to be brought before "Rulers." Our best mode of drawing brief and useful lessons from these occasions will perhaps be to contrast separately his conduct and character with the conduct and character of the rulers to whom he was successively opposed.

Lysias and St Paul

We may take Claudius Lysias, the commanding officer in the tower of Antonia, as the first specimen of these "rulers." And there is this to be said in reference to the transactions in which he was concerned, that the exercise of prudence is conspicuous both on his side and on St Paul's. But though the same term may be applied to the conduct of the two men, there is great difference in the moral aspects of the two cases. We may, in the first place, compare the perplexity and uncertainty of the soldier with the calm clear-sighted wisdom and straightforward conduct of the Apostle. The latter acts throughout as a man who has a distinct end before him, and is of course ready to avail himself of any circumstances which may be lawfully

made to bear upon that end, while the embarrassment of the former is evident at every point. When Claudius Lysias, dealing with St Paul as a Roman officer naturally would deal with a man who has been the cause of an uproar, had "ordered him to be bound with two chains," he then "demanded who he was and what he had done: and some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle" (Acts xxi. 33, 34).

Lysias Perplexed

Perplexity is again evident in his hasty assumption—"Canst thou speak Greek? Art thou not that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?" (verses 37, 38)—and still more in the order given that Paul "should be examined by scourging, that he might know wherefore they cried so against him" (Acts xxii. 24). Presently the officer found out that he had made a most serious mistake in "thus treating a Roman citizen" (verses 25-29), and therefore "on the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed his bands" and "brought him forth into their Council" (Acts xxii. 30; xxiii. 28).

To all this we may justly oppose the dignified self-

possession, calm courtesy, and excellent judgment of the Apostle. Wishing to gain his immediate purpose, he spoke to the officer in Greek (Acts xxi. 37), and made full use of the respectability which belonged to himself as a citizen of Tarsus, "no mean city" (verse 39). But till he had secured his opportunity of addressing the Jews in Hebrew (see p. 173), he said nothing of his Roman citizenship. For mentioning this he chose just the moment which would be most likely to produce an impression on officers and soldiers and to gain credit for his cause (Acts xxii. 25, 26), an advantage which he followed up by informing Claudius Lysias that his own citizenship was hereditary, whereas that officer had obtained the privilege only by purchase (verses 27, 28). And similar was his conduct before the Council, when he foiled their insidious injustice by skilfully availing himself of the important fact that on the great doctrine of the resurrection the Pharisees were in accord with himself (Acts xxiii. 6-10).

St Paul Self-possessed

But the difference between the Roman officer and the Christian Apostle goes deeper than this, that the one was puzzled and the other knew clearly how to act. There is further a clear contrast between fear on the side of the soldier, and fearlessness on the side of the prisoner. "The chief

Lysias Afraid, St Paul Confident

captain was afraid, after he knew that Paul was a Roman, and because he had bound him (Acts xxii. 29). Fear is naturally connected with selfishness; and though there is much to commend in Claudius Lysias, we can proceed further still in our comparison and trace selfishness on his side, while in Paul we note the most absolute forgetfulness of self and entire devotion to his cause.

Lysias Prevaricates

When the chief captain sends his prisoner under a military escort by Antipatris to Cæsarea (Acts xxiii. 23, 24, 33), we see that he is betrayed into that which is too often the expedient suggested by selfish fear, an evasion of the truth. In the letter addressed to "Felix the Governor," his statement is:—"I came with my troops and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman" (verse 27). Now here he states two facts that were true, but he puts them in a false combination. It was quite true that he had rescued St Paul, and that he had learnt he was "a Roman." The former, however, was not the consequence of the latter, but had in fact preceded it. It is one of those slight deviations from accuracy which often present themselves before us as easy remedies, when we find ourselves in a difficulty. There is no doubt that both Claudius Lysias and St Paul were placed in difficult positions on this occasion: and they both displayed signal prudence. But in our

moral estimate of prudence much depends on its motive, and much on its mode of dealing with minor details: and judged by both standards, the Christian Apostle, and not the heathen soldier, here furnishes the example which is worthy to be admired and to be followed.

But our Apostle is now in Cæsarea (Acts xxiii. 33), and Felix himself demands our attention. St Paul appears face to face with him, first on a public occasion, when he is put upon his trial, and next at a private interview, when he has an opportunity of appealing more directly to the governor's conscience. It will be an advantage to consider those two meetings separately.

St Paul and Felix

On the first of these occasions our thoughts are directed, not so much to the personal character of Felix, as to the treatment of St Paul by his accusers, and his own behaviour on the trial. As regards the conduct of this transaction, there seems to be nothing on the part of Felix worthy of blame. It was perfectly fair that he should inquire to what province his prisoner belonged (verse 34), and that he should add, "I will hear thee when thine accusers are also come" (verse 35); perfectly fair likewise to say, after he had heard the speeches of Tertullus and of the prisoner himself, "When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your

matter" (Acts xxiv. 22). Nor can we fail to notice and approve the kindness and liberality which are evident in the injunctions which followed, that the "centurion who kept Paul" was to relax the severity of the imprisonment as much as the law allowed, and to permit his friends to have free access to him (Acts xxiv. 23),—a leniency which it seems natural to attribute, in a great degree, to the favourable tone of the letter written by Lysias himself.

Attack and Defence

The lesson of this part of the history is to be drawn rather from observing the attitude of the Apostle in opposition to that of the professional orator (verse 1), who conducted the prosecution, and of the Jews who employed this orator's services. The attack was evidently planned with systematic care. But the whole proceeding was marked by great unfairness. The accusers were present (verse 8), but not the proper witnesses (verse 19). Tertullus, too, deviated from the truth in charging Lysias with injustice and violence (verse 7). In the face of all this, it is instructive to observe St Paul's calm and manly independence, and his simple straightforward statement of facts. And it is not less instructive to notice, on the one hand, the mean and contemptible flattery addressed by Tertullus to a ruler whose character was universally known to be worthless (verses 2, 3),

and the respectful courtesy within the strict limits of truthfulness which St Paul uses (verse 10), and which every Christian is bound to use towards every magistrate. And we can see more than this if we look below the surface, in the manner of St Paul's speech to Felix: for connecting what he says (verse 16), of his own strict care to maintain "always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men" with what occurred soon afterwards, we can hardly doubt that even on this public occasion the Apostle aimed directly at the individual conscience and the personal salvation of the man who presided as the judge. But this brings us to our second point.

The Reputation of Felix

Felix had once been a slave, and he was now in almost a royal office as the governor of a province. A heathen writer describes his character in curious harmony with this coincidence of facts. "In the practice of all kinds of lust and cruelty he exercised the power of a king with the temper of a slave."[1] And this terrible epigram is abundantly confirmed by the Jewish historian, who sets Felix before us, though in some respects vigorous and useful in his administration of the province, as a licentious murderer, procuring in the meanest manner the assassination of the High Priest.[2] It may have

[1] See note in *Life and Epistles*, vol. ii. p. 339.

[2] Joseph. *Ant.* xx. 8-5.

been through some base pandering to his avarice —in fact, "to do the Jews a pleasure" (Acts xxiv. 27)—that Lysias never came to appear for or against St Paul at Cæsarea.

The Slave Peeps Out: in Curiosity

However this may be, Felix is presently depicted in vivid colours by the inspired narrative in his true character as a slave. There was a craving to hear something more from this strange prisoner. This desire too was shared by Drusilla, "a Jewess," one of the three royal wives with whom history represents him as at different times associated. Thus "he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ." This interview seems to have taken place in private: and Paul used his opportunity with formidable power, addressing himself directly to that natural consciousness of guilt which in the case of a Heathen is the one simple starting-point of a new and better life. So he had preached to the Athenians (Acts xvii. 31) and written to the Romans (Rom. i. 18, 19, 32). So here he "reasoned" with Felix of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come" (Acts xxiv. 25).

—In Fear

This was followed by the manifestation of that fear which is the true mark of the slave—that "fear of death" to which we are all naturally in "bondage" (Heb. ii. 15), and from which only One can deliver us.

"Felix trembled." It was followed, too, by that hesitation and procrastination, of which we have all had humiliating experience—that presuming on the continuance of life, that expectation of new opportunities, which in all ages has been fatal to so many souls. "Go thy way for this time: when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts xxiv. 25).

Nor does the record of the slavishness of Felix end here. "He sent for Paul frequently, and communed with him." But his motive was the basest which a magistrate can indulge. "He hoped that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him." No doubt Paul might easily have acquiesced in this mode of obtaining deliverance. Funds might have been obtained without difficulty, and new facilities for preaching the Gospel might thus have been secured. But his Divine cause was not thus dependent on the meanness of a "prince of this world" (1 Cor. ii. 8).

—And in Greed

The sight of these two characters together at this point is one of the most instructive scenes in Scripture. And it is indeed no accident, but a coincidence to be most seriously weighed, that these two biographical paths should have crossed here, and that we (in every age of the church) should, by the possession of the record, have been placed at the intersection.

ST PAUL BEFORE RULERS

The Worth of Imprisonment

How often has a prison been a temporary refuge and shelter to good men, giving them opportunities for calm and quiet thought after troublous times! How often has it been more than this, furnishing occasions for permanent instruction to future ages, which would hardly have been possible in any other way! These reflections are forcibly suggested as we follow on the narrative of St Paul's detention at Cæsarea, from the period of the rule of Felix to that of his successor Festus. How much may have been done for the cause of Christ in the comparative freedom of this imprisonment we cannot possibly tell. It is, for instance, no unreasonable conjecture that St Luke's Gospel may have been written under St Paul's superintendence during those very "two years" (Acts xxiv. 27). But we turn from speculation and pursue the recorded history.

Festus

In Festus we see nothing of the slavish spirit which all authorities combine in attributing to Felix. His first answer to the vigilant and vindictive Jews, who lost not a moment in trying to persuade the new governor to bring Paul for trial to Jerusalem, a plot being laid to kill him on the way (Acts xxv. 1-3), was dignified and honourable. He said that Paul was in custody at Cæsarea, that he himself was speedily going thither and that the accusers ought to present themselves there (verses 4, 5);

and the words which he says that he further added were worthy of a responsible Roman ruler:—"It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him" (verse 16).

His procedure, too, on arriving at Cæsarea is marked by proper promptitude. On the very next day, "without delay" (verses 6, 17), he summons the prisoner before him and hears the charges. And though it was very natural that he should wish to please the Jews by transferring the trial to Jerusalem, yet, with perfect regard to justice and law, he asks St Paul's consent to the change, instead of arbitrarily insisting on it. And when (possibly to his great annoyance) appeal is made by the Apostle to the Emperor, he deals with this new turn of the proceedings prudently, considerately, and fairly (verses 12, 25).

His Procedure

If there is any fault to be traced in Festus during these transactions, it is rather that we see in him a want of real earnestness, a quiet confidence in his own good sense, and a careless resolve to do justice in regard to subjects which he really despised. It is somewhat remarkable that the nearest approach to abruptness in the words spoken by the Apostle

His Self-satisfaction

during these trials and interviews at Cæsarea should have been addressed to the one "ruler" whose character appears the highest. This may be accounted for by the temper of mind which has just been indicated. Nothing is more disliked and disapproved by God's faithful ambassadors than self-satisfied lukewarmness.

His delay

As to the existence of such a temper of mind, this at least may be noticed, that it is not till Agrippa and Bernice have been "several days" on their visit at Cæsarea, that St Paul's case is mentioned at all (Acts xxv. 14): and certainly the contemptuous spirit breaks out unequivocally in the rude exclamation with which he interrupts the Apostle's address,—"Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad" (Acts xxvi. 24). St Paul's answer completes one of the striking contrasts which mark all this period of his life. The self-complacent man of the world will not do an injustice: but he will not be betrayed into any sympathy with what is fanatical or unpractical. The words, however, of "truth and soberness" (verse 25) are not on the side of Festus, but on the side of the man whom he despises.

Agrippa and Bernice

The highest interest of these events at Cæsarea culminates in the words addressed by the Apostle to Agrippa. Festus, like Claudius Lysias, had been baffled and be-

wildered in this inquiry (Acts xxv. 13-21): and he was glad of the occasion afforded by the complimentary visit of Agrippa and Bernice for obtaining some light on the case which he was now bound to bring before the Emperor. For it naturally "seemed to him unreasonable to send a prisoner and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him" (verse 27). Agrippa, and Bernice with him, gladly used this opportunity for hearing and seeing a man, of whose name they must previously have heard. St Paul had now before him one whose moral responsibility was greater than that of Festus, and to whose conscience a direct path was open through the remembrance of early religious impressions. Thus turning to him abruptly, after the brief dialogue with Festus, he exclaimed, "King Agrippa, believest thou the Prophets? I know that thou believest."

Agrippa's Exclamation

Here it is that Agrippa uttered the words, which are popularly understood as an acknowledgment, that, under the pressure of this appeal, he was, "almost persuaded to become a Christian" (Acts xxvi. 28): and it is with reluctance that we deviate from this interpretation, remembering how often it has been used to point a most serious moral. But we really gain more than we lose by the correct translation, which may be given thus on the highest authority:

"What! In so short a space, and on so slight a summons to become a Christian—to forfeit perhaps fortune and rank, and to become the brother and the fellow of an outcast like thee—to part with all, as the result of listening, in a casual visit, to a poor prisoner's self-defence,—such changes are not for me!"[1] It was a scornful retort, either uttered to disguise his real feelings, or the true expression of a cold heart; and derisive smiles from Festus and Bernice very probably accompanied the words.

St Paul's Reply

The substance of the Apostle's reply, intensely earnest, but tenderly delicate, may be given on the same authority. "Well! be it sooner or later; be it on the sudden or on long reflection; be it by my brief words, or by any other process, which God may see fit in His wisdom and in His mercy to employ; my heart's desire and prayer is that thou, with all that hear me, mightest become such as I am, except these bonds." What a royal courtesy, what a commanding dignity, is in these memorable words! The true king here was the manacled and suffering prisoner, not the monarch seated in state by the side of the Emperor's representative and surrounded by all the pomp of office.

It is with pathetic interest that the mind lingers on the thought of this last of the Herodian line,

[1] Vaughan, *The Church of the First Days*, iii. p. 333.

who thus repelled an appeal which might have been full of blessing, not only to his own soul, but through him to multitudes of his fellow-countrymen. He lived on till the close of the first century, and died about the same time as the last of the Apostles. How much is suggested by the juxtaposition of such contrasted characters! The sin of unbelief is, as it were, personified in Agrippa II. and his miserable father; the living principle of faith in St John and St Paul.

The Opportunity Lost

And perhaps there is another contrast which should just be touched upon before we close. Conspicuous in these scenes at Cæsarea were two women — both princesses of a royal house—both brought up in the midst of the advantages of the Jewish religion —both familiarly and discreditably known to history—Drusilla (Acts xxiv. 24) and Bernice (Acts xxv. 13, 23; xxvi. 30), sisters of Agrippa II. the last of the Herods. Drusilla was the younger sister, and eminently beautiful. She shared the profligacy of Felix, and for his sake had left her husband, one of the petty kings whom the Romans allowed to reign on the Eastern frontier of the empire. Her fate was strange and impressive: for she perished, with the offspring of her unlawful marriage with Felix, in that eruption of Vesuvius which destroyed Herculaneum and Pompeii.

Drusilla

Bernice

In Bernice's character there seem to have been some noble elements. At least, one generous act on behalf of the Jewish people is recorded by the national historian. But her career will not bear the scrutiny of close examination. She had been with her brother in Rome before we see them here together at Cæsarea; and the most scandalous reports were current of all this portion of her life: and whatever might be the truth of these reports, this is undoubted, that we find her afterwards in the most shameful connexion both with Vespasian the conqueror of Judea, and with Titus his son.

A Contrast

Let the records of these illustrious ladies be compared with the modest annals of such women as Priscilla and Phœbe, who devoted themselves to the patient instruction of others (Acts xviii. 26), to errands of mercy (Rom. xvi. 1, 2), to the encouragement of Christian communion (1 Cor. xvi. 19), to the support of those who needed help (Rom. xvi. 2), and not always without difficulty and danger (verse 4): and a serious lesson may be read in comparison. Let it be remembered, too, that Drusilla and Bernice had possessed full opportunities of becoming "nursing mothers" of the Church of Christ. They knew "the prophets" (Acts xxvi. 27), and the early transactions of Gospel history had not been "done in a corner"

(verse 26). Nor were they themselves quite indifferent to religion: at least it is evident that they had some curiosity concerning it, and some love of the excitement which it affords. Nor need we, to apply the lesson to our own times, take any account of the darkest and most shameful side of these biographies. Women may sin grievously in giving themselves up to fashion without crime, and to display without pollution; and they too readily forget that they have greater power for good or for evil than the other half of the human race, whose lot is to take a more direct part in the open conflicts of life, and to work (or to trifle) before the public gaze.

Cæsarea lives in imperishable colours on these pages of the Sacred Volume. In itself, as we have seen, it was the most transient of cities, and is now the most helpless of ruins. But though few places in Palestine may have so little to attract the traveller, few places mentioned in the past records of the world are better worth remembering. No city with so short a history has contributed so much to the permanent instruction of mankind.

XI

THE VOYAGE AND SHIPWRECK —MELITA

The Voyage and Shipwreck—Religious Dangers of Seafaring Life: and its Opportunities—The Voyage Begun—The Stoppage at Sidon—Commercial Enterprise and Spread of Christianity—St Paul's Ships—The Voyage Resumed—Delays—Difficulties in Holy Scripture—The Need of Patience—The Case of Lasæa: and of Phenice—Vicissitudes of Travel—The Fair Wind—The Foul Wind—In the Gale—The Growing Peril—The Apostle's Faith—The Dignity of the Christian Character—St Paul's Confidence—St Paul's Prompt Action—His Character Recorded—The Gospel and the Life of Greece and Rome—St Paul at Malta—Sails for Italy—Nearing Rome—St Paul's Sufferings—His Burden—His Welcome—Lessons of the Journey Summarized.

The Voyage and Shipwreck

THE twenty-seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles used to be, in regard to many of the particulars which it relates, one of the obscurest narratives in Holy Writ. Careful examination of it in this country has resulted, not only in elucidating it, so that it is become one of the clearest of the histories of Scripture, but in making it the means of throwing a flood of light on the ships and navigation of the ancients.[1]

[1] Smith's *Voyage and Shipwreck of St Paul*, chap. xxiii. in the *Life and Epistles of St Paul*, and the article "Ship" in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

Meantime, that higher and religious interest which unquestionably belongs to the chapter seems to invite some further illustration than it has commonly received. The outward circumstances of the narrative of St Paul's voyage and shipwreck have been made perspicuous for all time to come. Its inner practical and devotional instruction has not yet been by any means exhausted.

It was to be expected that our land of sailors, where the love and knowledge of the sea is extended far beyond those who professionally "do business in great waters" (Ps. cvii. 23), would supply the necessary explanation of facts. It is to be hoped that in an age when commercial enterprise is every day more actively developed, the spiritual teaching associated with the Apostle's experience of the sea will be apprehended and valued more and more. The wisest method of securing this end seems to be to pursue such trains of religious thought as most obviously suggest themselves in connexion with the actual occurrences recorded,—making those occurrences the framework of the instruction,—explaining them where it is necessary, and then observing what they naturally teach. This course will be adopted in the few remarks which follow.

One leading thought connected with the seafaring life is the recollection of the peculiar dangers which it presents to the religious life. In this

country we are very familiar with this serious truth in some of its aspects. The monstrous evils of our emigrant ships are made known to us through the newspapers, while the remedies are seen to be very difficult. And even in ordinary merchant vessels, the absence of Divine worship, the discontinuance of the restraints of home, the abuse of power on the part of officers, the mutual corruption which must necessarily go on among sailors who cannot escape from one another, form an aggregate of moral harm which it is distressing to contemplate. And if we pursue the subject further, from the ship itself to the shores which it visits, how great is the humiliation, when we consider the disgrace brought on the Christian name by European sailors, who sanction and even introduce among the Heathen the vilest vices.

Religious Dangers of Seafaring Life

Yet this subject, like most subjects connected with the social intercourse of men, has a hopeful and cheering side as well as a dark one. If a sailor is a really religious man, hardly any one in the world has a greater power for good. In proportion to the closeness of contact is the intensity of the moral force of example. The captain of a ship has almost royal opportunities during the voyage; and the common seaman can make his influence felt in a way which would hardly be possible under any circumstances

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at home. And this is very particularly to be noticed, that a sailor must be deeply in earnest to maintain a consistent Christian profession at all. In most cases a mere orderly life passes current for the expression of true religious principle. But with him this is impossible. His efforts are more like the conflict and victory of the earliest Christian times, when every semblance of piety was brought severely to the test. Indeed it would be difficult to point out a more effective missionary than the seaman, who, on arriving at a new port,—when others are abusing their leisure for vicious indulgence, and industriously spreading mischief,—still sets himself firmly on the Lord's side, and seeks out opportunities for Christian worship and Christian fellowship.

Some reflections of this kind are associated with the first stage of the Apostle's progress. When the time came for his departure with other prisoners under the charge of the centurion Julius (Acts xxvii. 1), the ship, instead of taking the direct course towards the west, sailed northwards, and put into the harbour of Sidon (Acts xxvii. 3). An explanation of this might naturally be asked. It is impossible to be sure that we give the right answer to the question; for more answers than one would meet the question sufficiently. The ship may have touched at Sidon to land some passengers or to take in a part of her cargo.

The Voyage Begun

But another explanation is perhaps to be preferred. We know that the wind soon afterwards was blowing hard from the westward (verses 4, 7), and that westerly winds are very prevalent during the autumn in that part of the Levant. If then this was the case from the outset, no plan could be more judicious than to steer to the north, especially as the current on the coast of Syria sets in that direction.

The Stoppage at Sidon

However this may have been, St Paul's character and influence already come out clearly to view in the earliest part of the narrative. On arriving at Sidon, "Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself." How much would be involved in such a visit to the Christian community of the place, we can in some degree conjecture from reading the salutations in the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, or from the account in the Acts, of the interview and the parting at Miletus. But without knowing any details, we see here from the first, in St Paul, that manifestation of consistency and devotedness, that friendly influence over the minds of others, that example honestly open to the observation of all who saw him, which mark and give a character to all the subsequent portions of the voyage.

Another leading train of thought into which

we naturally pass while considering St Paul's progress over the sea, relates to the connexion which has often subsisted, and ought always to subsist, between commercial enterprise and the advance of religion. It would be easy to adduce illustrations of this truth from every period of the world's history. It has been pointed out that the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon (1 Kings x. 1-13; 2 Chron. ix. 1-12) may probably have first been suggested by the sight of the Jewish monarch's ships on the voyages along the Arabian coast from Ceylon and the south of India. The curious resemblance in the time of observing Easter between the early churches of Gaul and those of Asia Minor has been noted as a natural result of the close mercantile relations which subsisted from very early times between Marseilles and the Greek Levant. We might easily multiply more modern examples. Nor need we limit ourselves to the beneficent and honourable aspects of trade, in order to see how it can be made subservient to the spread of religion. It was the slave-trade between Britain and Rome which became, under God's good providence, the occasion of the sending of our first Anglo-Saxon missionaries.[1]

Commercial Enterprise and Spread of Christianity

[1] An animated account of the meeting of Gregory the Great with the "three Yorkshire boys," is given in Stanley's *Memorials of Canterbury*, pp. 8-10.

The circumstances which led Marsden to introduce the Gospel into New Zealand were not creditable to English Christianity or English commerce.[1] Wherever there is mercantile activity, an opportunity for missionary progress is made ready. Even a Heathen coasting vessel or a Heathen corn-ship may have an Apostle on board.

St Paul's Ships

St Paul accomplished his voyage in three ships; and all of them were connected with trade. In fact, no other means then existed for enabling travellers to move from one city to another by sea. The first vessel which was found convenient for Julius and his party was probably a small coaster; and he made use of her merely because she was bound to that eastern edge of the Archipelago which was then called "Asia" (Acts xxvii. 2), and in some one of the harbours of which he knew he was likely to find some other ship bound direct for Italy.

The Voyage Resumed

This expectation was fulfilled. Continuing northwards still from Sidon, because of the contrary winds, and keeping under the lee of Cyprus (verse 4), and then beating to the westward near the coast of the mainland, and using the favourable current which sets past Cilicia and Pamphylia, they arrived at Myra (verse 5). "There the centurion found a ship of

[1] *New Zealand and its Inhabitants*, by Rev. R. Taylor, p. 285.

Alexandria sailing into Italy, and he put his prisoners therein" (verse 6). The Apostle was now on the line of traffic, which had inevitably sprung up between the great Roman market on the one hand, and the productive corn-fields of the Nile on the other.

Delays

The ship proceeded on her voyage; but the wind still blew hard from the westward, so that she worked up very slowly under the coast to Cnidus, the south-western extremity of the peninsula, and then was forced to run in a southerly direction to Salmone, the eastern point of Crete (verse 7), and thence to beat to the westward again under the shelter of the high mountains of that island to the nearest convenient anchorage. Still no danger seems to have been apprehended. But the weather caused a considerable delay at "Fair Havens," till at last the season came on when (to the ancients) it was hazardous to pursue long voyages across the open sea, and the question of wintering in some safe harbour arose (verses 8-12).

Difficulties in Holy Scripture

At this part of the history our meditations are turned into a new channel. The frequent mention of places in a fictitious narrative intended to be received as true would be a dangerous experiment; and if the mutual relations of the places were given, and some descriptions introduced, by an author not really

acquainted with the facts of the case, it is probable that time would reveal discrepancies, and discredit the writing. On the contrary, when such details stand the test of time, and especially when their accuracy, after being more or less doubted, is proved by renewed and continued inquiry, the evidence for the truthfulness of the narrative is felt to be more conclusive in proportion to their variety and complexity. Illustrations of this kind of argument are familiar to us in reference to certain parts of the Old Testament, such as the history of Elijah, and the prophecies concerning Nineveh. Nor are instances wanting of the same general nature in regard to the narrative parts of the New Testament. There has been a slow accumulation of evidence for the correctness of historical and geographical facts mentioned in the Bible, on which some shade of doubt had previously rested.

The Need of Patience

All this affords to us a very useful admonition. It suggests to us the wisdom of waiting calmly and patiently for the clearing of such points as may seem doubtful at present. And further, it admonishes us that, just as historical and geographical difficulties have been removed, so may those scientific difficulties of Scripture, which weigh very heavily on some minds at present, be expected to yield at length before advancing and mature research.

THE CASE OF LASÆA

The points before us on the present occasion are simply questions of minute topography. "Fair Havens" is described to us by St Luke as "a place nigh whereunto is the city of Lasæa." Now the city of Lasæa is not mentioned by any other ancient writer: and this seems a little remarkable in the case of an island so illustrious as Crete, and so frequently mentioned in Greek and Roman literature; and the accuracy of the sacred historian might on this ground very easily be called in question. But within the last few years certain ruins have been found (first noticed indeed by one of our countrywomen) exactly in the right place; and the rude peasantry know them—as, in truth, their ancestors have for generations known them—by the name of Lasæa.

The Case of Lasæa

The other question relates to the harbour of Phenice, which the sailors, indeed, were unable to reach, but which is described in such a way as to invite modern inquiry into the actual facts of the coast (Acts xxvii. 12). It clearly afforded safe shelter and good anchorage; for the sailors wished to "winter" there. It is needless to enter here more precisely into the description. The point of interest is that in answer to very recent inquiries concerning this matter, it was very positively stated both by naval officers and by intelligent men engaged in the

—And of Phenice

merchant service that no such harbour existed at all on the south coast of Crete, to the west of Fair Havens. But intimations began gradually to be received that such a place does exist, and that it affords good shelter. And now our own Admiralty Chart places the matter beyond a doubt. Phenice is just where the notices of ancient authors would lead us to expect to find it; its harbour has excellent soundings, is well protected from storms, and eminently "commodious to winter in."

Vicissitudes of Israel

As we pursue the narrative of the apostolic voyage, the moral scenery shifts with the changing views of land and water, and we are carried once more into a new, but very instructive train of reflection. It is the lesson of sudden disappointment after sanguine hope, which is now before us. How often are we solemnly instructed by these alternations in the actual experience of life! A vast fortune, or a sufficient competency has been realised, and all seems safely prepared for peace and rest during the remainder of life; but a rapid decay of health and strength takes place, and the enjoyment of worldly blessings becomes impossible. A traveller returns to his dear home after long wandering in foreign countries; but just on the threshold he receives news which blights his heart and makes his home no longer home. A mountain has been successfully ascended, which never had been

trodden on its summit by human foot before, but the descent is hardly begun, when death inflicts a blow upon the enterprise with an appalling suddenness and violence, the very news of which makes us shudder.

The Fair Wind

This moral seems set before us as in a parable by the next incidents in the voyage which we are considering. After this long continuance of rough and unfavourable westerly winds, a change of weather came to encourage the seamen. "The south wind blew softly." Nothing could be more propitious for a successful run to Phenice, which was only a few miles distant from Fair Heavens; and the sailors "supposed that they had obtained their purpose" (Acts xxvii. 13). The very expression shows that they were full of sanguine and confident feelings; and it is evident that even common precautions were not taken; for we find from what follows (verse 16) that the boat was towing behind. They were almost in sight of their destination, when (as is often the case on that coast) a north-easterly wind came down suddenly, like a tornado from the mountains, and seized the ship with such violence, that she was whirled out of her course, and for a time compelled to drift before the gale (Acts xxvii. 14, 15). A more severe instance of sudden disappointment can hardly be imagined. And such disappointments are made

The Foul Wind

worse to bear, if they have been brought on through our acting against good advice. St Paul had "admonished" them that they could not pursue the voyage from Fair Havens without great risk both to the ship and to the cargo, and to their own lives (verses 9, 10, 21); but very naturally more confidence had been placed in the opinion of the owner of the ship and the steersman, than in that of a passenger who was also a prisoner (verse 11). The time soon came, however, when this mere passenger, this despised prisoner, was felt and recognised as the master spirit of all on board, when all were invigorated by his courage, and all owed their lives to his wisdom and presence of mind.

In the Gale

Through the imminent peril, the distress and fatigue, which followed during a whole fortnight—for the gale lasted throughout that time (verse 27)—St Paul exhibits a signal example of fearlessness in the midst of danger, and of tranquillity undisturbed by the excitement which surrounded him. But besides this mere fact of courage and calmness, we are informed of the source of these admirable virtues. We see him here in the exercise of faith in God. We find that he was engaged in prayer during all this terrific war of wind and water. Thus we seem to approach the secret meaning of this whole narrative, and begin to read its innermost instruc-

tion. Many are the storms which agitate and vex our life, and very prolonged are some of the trials and perplexities through which we may be called to pass; but we can be calm and brave, and, weak as we are, we can impart a wonderful encouragement to others, if, like the Apostle, we maintain an unbroken communion with God, and if we can honestly add, as Paul added,—"Whose I am, and whom I serve" (verse 23).

The incidents which we have to follow during this perilous and busy part of the voyage are briefly these. A temporary lull under the lee of "an island called Clauda" (verse 16) enabled the sailors to adopt such measures as afforded some poor hope of passing safely through the gale. The boat was taken on board, but with considerable difficulty—strong ropes were passed round the hull of the ship, to prevent the timbers from starting—her head was turned away from the direction of those dangerous "quicksands" on the African coast, towards which she was rapidly moving, and (to use the language of English seamen) she was "laid-to" in such a manner that she would drift slowly towards the west or north-west (Acts xxvii. 16, 17).

The peril, however, grew worse during each successive day of the storm. The vessel had sprung a leak. Everything that could be spared was thrown overboard

The Growing Peril

(verse 18), the passengers themselves being required to give their help in the emergency (verse 19). Even in modern times, when the compass is always at hand to show the direction which the ship is taking, such a state of things is full of extreme wretchedness to the drenched and weary sailors, and the terrified and sleepless passengers. But ancient navigation depended on the "sun and stars"; and if the sky was overcast for "many days," a new element of most distressing doubt was added to the terrors of a storm; so that we cannot wonder that on this occasion "all hope of being saved was taken away" (verse 20).

The Apostle's Faith

Here it is that the Apostle's cheerful trust is seen to shine clear and bright amidst the surrounding gloom. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness" (Ps. cxii. 4). "By faith" Paul feared not the wrath of the tempest, but endured and was stedfast, "as seeing Him who is invisible" (Heb. xi. 27). He was calmly confident that his own path would be safely guided to its destined termination, and that the lives of all who sailed with him would be preserved, though they "must be cast upon a certain island" (Acts xxvii. 26).

A thousand times since has Christianity proved itself a living power, when mere human strength has given way to despondency and terror.

Persecuted slaves have risen high in moral dignity above their tyrants; and even weak women and children have been a wonder and a sign in their courage—because they have "believed God, that it should even be as it was told them" (verse 25).

The Dignity of the Christian Character

If the moral dignity of the Christian character is brought to view by the circumstances which occurred during the continuance of the gale, the practical effects of that character in producing wisdom and promptitude, and in giving guidance to others, are elucidated by the circumstances of the shipwreck itself. It is one of the Divine marks of Christianity, that it often communicates a holy tact in dealing with emergencies, gives a sagacious insight into characters and motives, and enables even men of ordinary powers to exercise a remarable influence over others. The very simplicity of a true Christian's aim, and his watchful readiness to use every opportunity for service to God, frequently supply an aptitude and resource, which are better far than any natural talents.

St Paul's Confidence

We have only to follow in order the incidents connected with the shipwreck to see how this is illustrated in the case of St Paul. During the gloomiest part of the storm he had invigorated the seamen by his

hopeful and confident words:—"Now I exhort you to be of good cheer—Sirs, be of good cheer" (Acts xxvii. 22, 25), and, as the critical moment approaches, he gradually rises to a position of supreme authority, so that everything that is done to save the ship is practically done by his command. The vessel is anchored in "fifteen fathoms," on a lee shore in the middle of the night; breakers are distinctly heard by the seamen, and all are anxiously "wishing for the pay" (verses 27-29).

St Paul's Prompt Action

Just then the sailors combine in a plot to leave the passengers in the ship, and to seek safety themselves by getting off in the boat. St Paul divines their purpose, and promptly thwarts it by speaking to the soldiers, who cut the ropes and set the boat adrift (verses 30-32). Next, he nerves the hearts and recruits the bodily strength of all on board by persuading them to take a hearty meal before the labours which await them with the dawn, and at the same time inculcates the duty of thankfulness to Almighty God, who gives us "our daily bread," and "delivers us from evil" (verses 33-38).

His Character Recorded

Presently, when the ship has been run aground, and a good hope of safety prevails among all on board, a new danger threatens the Apostle's own life, and is averted through the influence of his character. The

soldiers, fearing that the prisoners, for whom they were responsible, should escape, proposed that they should be put to death, when Julius, whose feeling of respect and regard towards his chief prisoner we have seen from the first,—"willing to save Paul,—kept them from their purpose," and then gave orders that all should get to land by swimming, or on broken pieces of the ship (verses 39-44). "And so it came to pass," by God's blessing on His Apostle's courage and sympathy and wisdom, "that they escaped all safe to land."

The Gospel and the Life of Greece and Rome

Another and a very different thought presents itself in connexion with the concluding and prosperous section of the voyage. Even superficial thinkers must often have been struck by the great part which classical Greece and Rome have played in the history of man, and how their languages and institutions have been adopted, as it were, by Christianity, and purified, and made into a perpetual possession for all generations. It is an impressive fact that the new revelation should have first been made widely known in those countries, and just at the time of the maturity of the Roman empire, and also in close contact with Greek Art and Philosophy. But when we carry our reflections down the stream of time, and consider how all the highest education has been

based on the two classical languages, we see more clearly the Divine plan and purpose, and adore God's wisdom and power in making even heathenism subservient to His children's good. Literature and History seem to combine in saying to us, "All things are for your sakes" (2 Cor. iv. 15). Even that which in itself is full of harm and corruption may, through grace, be made a link in the golden chain: "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 21-23).

St Paul at Malta

This is a natural train of reflection to a Christian scholar, as he watches the ship which took St Paul safely from Malta to Puteoli. He had spent the winter in the island, where, delivered from the viper, he was again acclaimed as "a god" (Acts xxviii. 6); and then finished his voyage "in a ship of Alexandria, whose sign was Castor and Pollux" (Acts xxviii. 11). The vessel in which he went was a corn-ship, like that in which he had been wrecked.

Sails for Italy

The ornaments of her prow were two heathen divinities, two brothers famous in classical mythology. Thus the Apostle sailed in an Egyptian merchantman, under the tutelage of pagan gods, to accomplish his Christian mission.

When we look back upon that first century, and see in imagination that ancient vessel, with

ST. PAUL AT MELITA.
(Acts xxviii, 3.)

her cargo of grain, and her great heavy sail filled with the southerly breeze (verse 13), and the white spray of the Mediterranean rising under her bows and dashing over the sculptured figures of "Castor and Pollux,"—while the Apostle is there among the Gentile sailors, with the Gospel in his heart and on his lips,—we seem to read some useful lessons,—we seem to be reminded, not only that merchants may be missionaries, but that a classical education, based upon the heathen literature of Greece and Rome, may be the means of advancing the progress of apostolic truth.

Nearing Rome

And thus we accompany the Apostle till he sets his foot on Italian ground. We have previously seen him in the other land of Classical antiquity. Greece had been, years before, one of the scenes of his labours. His preaching at Athens was a marked occasion in his career. And now he is proceeding along the Appian Way, and approaching Rome. This crisis of his life is very impressive, and it invites us to turn to one other subject very full of instruction.

St Paul's Sufferings

Let us pause for a moment to consider the solitude of the man, his unfriended condition, and the tremendous magnitude of the undertaking on which he was engaged,—which indeed was nothing less

than the effecting of a revolution in the habits of thought of the whole Roman empire. The sense of his weakness, too, impresses us still farther, when we duly consider the sufferings which he had previously gone through. We are apt to forget how much sorrow and toil he had been called to bear, not only in his recent voyage, but in many earlier years. "Thrice I suffered shipwreck" (2 Cor. xi. 25). This was said in an Epistle written long before the imprisonment at Cæsarea; and this was only a small part of the catalogue of afflictions which had been borne already even at that time. Even without this earlier list, the thought of the protracted sufferings of the recent voyage, coming as they did after a time of imprisonment, and of manifold persecutions, with a frame enfeebled by sickness and now beginning to feel the infirmities of age, would lead us to look with something like compassion on St Paul at this point of his history, if we did not remember that he was an Apostle.

His Burden

But when we take into account the whole load of trial which had come upon him in many previous years, we begin to have some faint notion of the depression under which this lonely martyr would have sunk without the support of Divine grace, and we appreciate the value even of those common consolations

which were afforded to him in his hours of weakness. And this is the point to which the preceding remarks have tended. The apostolic life was not a state of supernatural elevation above the reality of suffering. But it was a condition of much conflict and distress, supported and cheered by heavenly consolations, and often by consolations of an ordinary kind. And such has been the case with the followers of the Apostles in all subsequent ages. The Christian life implies no exemption from trial. On the contrary, it is often a life of very special trial; but it has also very special comforts: and the comforts not unfrequently come, in the course of God's providence, by very common methods, just when they are most needed.

His Welcome

One little incident in this concluding part of our narrative brings this cheering truth before us in a manner well adapted to attract our sympathy, and closely touching our own experience. He was proceeding on his weary way with the double burden of his sorrows and of his commission. The brethren at Rome had heard of his arrival at Puteoli, and went in two companies to meet him. One meeting took place at Appii Forum, and the other at the Three Taverns, well known stations on this great southern road (Acts xxviii. 25): and the sentence which is added is full of expression,—

"whom when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage." The words seem to tell a sad story both of distressing recollections of the past and of disheartening fears for the future. But they also speak of new courage and vigour imparted just in the way in which, at times of despondency, they may be imparted to ourselves. Our reflections began with a notice of the refreshment derived from Christian friendship and communion, and they end with a notice of similar help from the same source. The lesson which was read on the coast of Syria (Acts xxvii. 3; see p. 206), is read again on the high roads of Italy (Acts xxviii. 15). "God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted" Paul again by "the coming" of his friends (2 Cor. vii. 6). Once more he had experience of the truth of the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. xii. 9). Once more he could say with the Psalmist, "In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart Thy comforts have refreshed my soul" (Ps. xciv. 19).

Lessons of the Journey Summarised

We have been able, without any strained commentary on the narrative, and while simply following the successive incidents of the voyage, the shipwreck, and the arrival, to bring all these instructive subjects before the mind,—the blessing that may result from the presence of a godly man on board

a ship,—the happy combination that may be established between the progress of commerce and the spread of religion,—the wisdom of patiently waiting for the clearing up of those points in the Sacred Records which at present are doubtful,—the courage which true Christianity gives in the midst of danger,—the sound judgment and moral influence which are among the results of consistent Christian character,—the power which the Gospel has of safely consecrating and wisely using the works of the Heathen,—the comfort which the afflicted believer may confidently expect to receive in God's good time and God's appointed way. Other points of instruction would of course occur upon the same field of thought to various minds; but these subjects together form no mean benefit to be derived from these concluding chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.

And if we are to close with one other general remark, it is this,—that God can work the greatest ends by the smallest means,—can preserve the lives of His saints, through hairbreadth escapes, by help of the most trifling incidents,—can advance the progress of His mighty truth by adjusting the unobserved occurrences of every day. It might at first sight seem surprising that in the Holy Volume so large a space should be given to the mere occurrences of a storm at sea and the details of a shipwreck. But in proportion as we study

this narrative closely and reverently, we shall cease to wonder. Nothing is of greater benefit to us than to be convinced of the interpenetration of the Divine life with common experience, and to learn the importance of little things.

XII

TOIL AND SUFFERING TO THE END—ROME

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St Paul's Life of Suffering and Toil

If one lesson above all others may naturally be drawn from the last scenes in St Paul's life, it is the lesson of unwearied activity in the cause of Christ, notwithstanding sorrow and disappointment, weariness and failing health, persecution, solitude, and desertion; and in concluding this series of papers we cannot dwell on any subject more useful to ourselves.

It is the combination of suffering with toil which makes the example of St Paul, in this point of view, so peculiarly instructive. We are all called upon to suffer. This lot we cannot escape; and of course we accept it as a salutary discipline.

But toil is in some degree voluntary: and we sometimes too readily make suffering an excuse for rest. Not so the Apostle Paul. After the shock of the conversion and the three days' blindness, he "straightway" began his work (Acts ix. 20). After he was bruised and wounded and almost dead at Lystra, we read of no intermission; the very "next day" he was a missionary again (Acts xiv. 20). The imprisonment and torture at Philippi was only a compulsory and momentary pause in his elastic activity (Acts xvi. 22-25, 31-34). When he was detained in Galatia by severe sickness, this state of health became the occasion of preaching the Gospel (Gal. iv. 13). We know, too, from other Epistles, how the deepest sufferings were connected with his work, and became incentives to it rather than hindrances, at Ephesus, in Macedonia, and at Corinth (1 Cor. ii. 3-5; xv. 30-32; xvi. 9; 2 Cor. i. 8, 9; vii. 5; xi. 23-30; xii. 9, 10; xiii. 4); and this same unswerving habit was his characteristic to the last.

Influence of the Combination

This combination, too, is important in another way. It is suffering which makes toil so eloquent, so efficient in persuading others and in controlling their conduct. It is quite possible to work for work's sake. But such a course of life is commonly barren of really valuable results. Busy occupation unaccompanied by feeling and sympathy is like the noisy and

restless brook, which attracts attention, but does little service. Mere suffering, on the other hand, without the activity of Christian love, is like the stagnant pool, burying itself gloomily and silently out of sight. But when depth and motion are combined, then we have a river copious, healthful, and beneficent, capable of reaching and enriching a thousand productive fields, and of promoting busy and cheerful intercourse among many and diversified communities.

St Paul in Rome

St Paul was now in Rome—brought through many dangers, and by very unexpected methods—but brought in safety—to that city, which in letters (Rom. i. 10-15; xv. 22-29), and in conversation (Acts xix. 21), he had anxiously mentioned as a destined scene of his labours, and which, indeed, had been pointed out to him in that aspect by solemn and definite prophecies (Acts xxiii. 11). And now, what is the example which he sets to us immediately on his arrival, and during his residence in Rome? We shall see that it is the example of incessant activity and patient perseverance, in spite of suffering, discouragement, and opposition.

Prompt Action

In the first place we should notice that not a moment is lost. He is handed over, with the other prisoners, by his friend Julius, to the commanding officer of the Prætorian Guards. Arrangements are consider-

ately made (probably through the influence of Julius) that he is to have the least irksome form of imprisonment, being "suffered to dwell by himself with the soldier that kept him" (Acts xxviii. 16). And then, we are told, "it came to pass that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together" (verse 17). No sooner is he adjusted to his new position, than he begins to work. Weary, as he must have been, after his long and exciting journey,—suffering, as he probably was, in health—he proceeds at once, with cheerful alacrity, to his appointed task. Nor does he act on mere eagerness and impulse. His steady laboriousness is equal to his promptitude. As at Troas he spent a whole night (and that just before a voyage) in speaking of the things of Christ (Acts xx. 11), so here, when a day was appointed, and "many came to him into his lodging," he explained the Scriptures, and argued "from the morning until the evening" (Acts xxviii. 23). And there is not the least trace of fanaticism in his mode of procedure. We cannot read the whole passage (verses 17-23), without observing that he exercised the most calm judgment in dealing with the Jews, and took the utmost pains to conciliate them. It is a great example, which will supply us with a very useful standard in many of the exigencies and conflicts of life.

St Paul's Alacrity

—And Patience

Nor is this all that the rapidly-concluding narrative of the Acts sets before us in regard to his diligence in the Imperial City. From his temporary residence he passed to a more settled home, which, though still his prison, is at the same time "his own hired house" (verse 30): and contributions furnished on the spot or supplied from a distance (Phil. ii. 25; iv. 10, 14), would easily enable him to secure this advantage. Here "he dwelt two whole years, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xxviii. 30, 31). Still then we see these two elements of true Christian industry, alacrity and patience. He will not accept his chain as an excuse for idleness. If he cannot travel, he can argue. If he cannot address large multitudes, he can instruct individuals. And what a cheerful, unyielding, thankful tone is evident in the very concluding words! He did this "with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

Busy years

How much of toil is condensed into these last words of St Luke's narrative, we may in some degree gather by looking into the Epistles which St Paul wrote during his residence in Rome. They furnish some few materials for filling up this slight sketch of work. And most interesting it is to be able to contemplate any details of his work in a church

which he had so earnestly desired to visit, to which he had long before written so elaborate an exposition of Christian truth, and to so many members of which he had sent affectionate messages by name. In the case of Onesimus (Philem. 10), we see something of the opportunities which were afforded, through his accessibility in his place of imprisonment, for the evangelisation even of those who were not residents in Rome. The very changing of the soldier who guarded him must have been an occasion for diffusing an atmosphere of Christianity in many directions. What appears in our version as a reference to the "Palace" (Phil. i. 13), is rather, when correctly understood, a reference to the household troops connected with the palace. These were partly on the Palatine Hill and partly in large barracks oatside the walls.

St Paul and the Soldiery

Again it would be more accurate to translate the conclusion of the sentence thus; "my bonds in Christ" are "made manifest to all the rest" of the soldiers. And when we consider the great part which is played by the soldiers quartered in the metropolis of a vast military monarchy, and the constant communication and conversation which goes on among them, we feel that it is hardly an exaggeration to say, with a Dutch commentator on this passage, "Presently there was not a soldier left in the

Prætorium, who had not seen and guarded and heard the prisoner, and who on his side had not become a witness of the strength of conviction, the calm submission of faith, the tenderness of love, the liveliness of hope, which marked this confessor and messenger of Jesus of Nazareth[1]" Still there is in this same Epistle an explicit reference to "Cæsar's household" (Phil. iv. 22). The Gospel had penetrated the palace itself. It may indeed have penetrated before into those outwardly magnificent, but morally polluted precincts. Probably the converts were slaves; and it is a most interesting fact that some of the very names, which are familiar to us in the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, have been found in a place of interment connected with the palace and the household of the emperor of Rome.

—And Cæsar's Household

But it is worth while here to pause for a moment on the mere fact of the writing of these Epistles themselves; for they call our thoughts away from the interests (manifold as they are) of St Paul's anxious work at the centre, to a wide circumference over which the exertion of his active sympathy was simultaneously diffused. At the very time when all this "pressure" was upon him at Rome,—a pressure which must have included all the elements

The Case of all the Churches

[1] Beets, p. 265.

of consultation and debate, systematic teaching, and provision for organisation, and which must have made incessant demands on his time and anxious thought,—there was also weighing upon him, to use his own phrase at an earlier period, "the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. xi. 28). A man may be labouring diligently on one spot, and yet what he is doing there may be a very inadequate measure of his whole occupation; for he may at the same time be exercising his active thought and lavishing his deepest feelings on remote and widely-spread concerns, and conducting by letters or by messengers a correspondence with many distant places.

A Busy Life

Such was St Paul's attitude at Rome. Messengers came and went between him and distant churches; and in the cases of Onesimus (Col. iv. 9; Philem. 12), Tychicus (Eph. vi. 21, 22, Col. iv. 7, 8), Timotheus (Phil. ii. 19-23), and Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 25-30; iv. 18), we see how these journeys were used for purposes of encouragement, charity, instruction, and admonition. In the Epistle to Philemon we see how he carries in his heart the separate cases of the individual Christians from whom he is separated. In the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians we see how actively his mind ranges over the heretical movements which are beginning to disturb the churches of Asia, and how copiously he unfolds the Christian doctrine as the best answer

to those growing errors. In the Epistle to the Philippians we see how anxious he is that the generosity and faithfulness of his dear Macedonian friends should not be marred by any discord.

—And a Cheerful Worker

This too is to be observed of these letters, that there is a vigorous, cheerful tone in them, corresponding with what we have noticed as the expression of the last words in the Acts of the Apostles. It is as if St Luke had caught the elastic, unyielding, hopeful spirit of his master, and concentrated the feeling into those few words. To convince himself that this is no mere fancy, let any one "mark the cheerful tone in which Paul writes to Philemon, and the strong, confident, even sanguine strain which runs through the Epistle to the Colossians"; especially let him follow the whole tenor of the Epistle to the Philippians, in which the words "joy" and "rejoice" occur more than a dozen times; and let him notice the military imagery of the Epistle to the Ephesians (Eph. vi. 14-17), where the very circumstances of his present imprisonment are turned, as it were, into a parable for the encouragement of others.

The Underlying Sorrow

And yet, on the other hand, who can read these letters attentively without catching the sound of an undertone of sadness which pervades them? How evident it is that the writer feels bitterly the restraint of

his bondage? Again and again he alludes to this galling loss of liberty. He is the "prisoner of Jesus Christ" (Eph. iii. 1; Philem. 1, 9), "the prisoner of the Lord" (Eph. iv. 1), and he feels all the indignity of this position. Not only is he "in bonds" (Col. iv. 3), but—contrary to the very law of nations—he is "an ambassador in bonds" (Eph. vi. 20). How grateful he is for the kindness of the Philippians at this time! He had thought of them affectionately "in his bonds" (Phil. i. 7), and they had "well done" in that they had supplied his wants, and "communicated with his affliction" (Phil. iv. 14). He feels keenly also the loneliness and isolation of his condition. For though he has some faithful "fellow prisoners" and friends, yet he pathetically adds, "These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me" (Col. iv. 11). And worse than this, he is oppressed by the sight of unfaithful and inconsistent Christians, and he has to warn some, "even weeping," that they are really "the enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. iii. 18). He had also to bear the bitterness of ungenerous partisanship. "Some preach Christ of envy and strife and contention, supposing to add affliction to my bonds" (Phil. i. 15, 16). Thus we can see how much sorrow was combined at this time with his toil. His true, deep comfort was in feeling that he was associated with, and

conformed into, the sufferings of Christ (Phil. iii. 10). Nay, it is in reference to this very period that he uses the strongest expression to be found in Scripture regarding the share which, in a most important sense, even the redeemed sinner has in the Saviour's sufferings: "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the affliction of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church, whereof I am made a minister" (Col. i. 24, 25).

Deliverance from Bondage

From this bondage St Paul was at length delivered. There is no good reason for doubting that old opinion of early times (an opinion supported by excellent arguments, in addition to an independent of general tradition), that St Paul had two imprisonments at Rome, with a period of travelling and renewed missionary exertion between them. Thus our view is prolonged into his declining years. But nowhere do we see the least intimation of any cessation of toil or of suffering. His untiring industry never relaxed. So long as we can trace him, to the last moment, he is always at work; and his sorrow and trial increased more and more towards the end.

The Time of Freedom

As to the interval between the imprisonments, we have for our sources of information the first Epistle to Timothy, and the Epistle to Titus, with some few notices in

the third Pastoral Letter. These indeed furnish but scanty materials for filling up the details with exactitude; but conjecturally it is easy to draw out journeys, in more ways than one, which will combine and harmonise all the separate intimations of times and places. The Apostle's range of travelling must have been considerable. We have no reason to doubt that he fulfilled his previously expressed anticipations of revisiting Asia (Philem. 22) and Macedonia (Phil. ii. 24). We trace him at such distant points as Crete in the Ægean (Tit. i. 5), and Nicopolis near the opening of the Adriatic (Tit. iii. 12). It is very probable that he went to Spain; and not impossible that he came to Britain. All this hurrying from point to point must have implied no small physical exertion, at a time when strength of body was gradually declining. But travelling was the least part of his toil. All his work was now more than ever attended with mental anxiety. He had to deal more than before with organised opposition (1 Tim. iv. 1, 2; Titus i. 9, 10; iii. 1, 10, 11). The church now required everywhere systematic provision for the establishment and succession of its ministry (1 Tim. iii. 1-13; v. 22; Titus i. 5). There was need, too, in various points of detail, to make arrangements for the journeys of others (Titus iii. 13); and in an age like ours, which is richly provided with all facilities for travelling, we

are apt to forget how much these arrangements involved in ancient days.

In the face of all these exigencies, we cannot too carefully notice the strength and decision of St Paul's injunctions to Timothy and Titus. Such vigorous images as those which he drew from the Greek games, (1 Tim. iv. 8; vi. 12) show the spirit in which he himself struggled with his difficulties. Not that these general statements (which are all that is possible here) furnish any adequate representation of what the Apostle suffered and did in this interval of time. Even where, at an earlier period, we had all the advantages of St Luke's own narrative, we could gather from it no idea of all those sufferings, the enumeration of which is crowded into the pages of the Epistles to the Corinthians. Some phrases from those Epistles furnish the best touches to complete the present picture also. "Our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears" (2 Cor. vii. 5). "In journeyings often, in perils among false brethren" (2 Cor. xi. 26). "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses" (2 Cor. vi. 4). "I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. xv. 10).

Suffering Implied

The Last Scene

At length, with the second Epistle to Timothy—fit accompaniment of the conclusion of this wonderful life of sympathy and service—we come to the last scene of all. After an arrest (very probably at Nicopolis), he was again brought to Rome, again "a prisoner of our Lord" (2 Tim. i. 8). But this imprisonment was more severe than the former. Nero was on the throne, and Christianity was beginning to be felt as a moral power, worthy to be hated and persecuted. Thus Paul was probably in no "hired house," but in a dungeon. He was treated now as if he had been "a malefactor." Yet though suffering "trouble even unto bonds," he exulted in the thought that the "word of God could not be bound" (2 Tim. ii. 9). There might be risk in visiting him; certainly there was disgrace. Yet we read of "Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia," and other "brethren" with whom he could communicate (2 Tim. iv. 21): and Onesiphorus "sought him out very diligently" and "found him," and "oft refreshed him, and was not ashamed of his chain" (2 Tim. i. 16, 17). It is very affecting to notice how prominently in this last Epistle individuals are mentioned, and how the personal emotions of the Martyr-Apostle are thus brought to view. He is saddened by the defection of Demas and the departure of Crescens and Titus (2 Tim. i. 4, 10). Erastus is not with him

(verse 20). Tychicus has been sent on a distant mission (verse 12), and Trophimus is not only far away, but suffering from serious sickness (verse 20).

Meanwhile, no one stood with the Apostle (2 Tim. iv. 16) except Luke (verse 11), and he feels a longing even for the books which he had left with Carpus (verse 13). The alternations of feeling between the sense of injury and the most tender recollection, are very striking in this letter. On the one hand we find the strongest language concerning the opposition of Alexander (verse 14), and the unfaithfulness of those Christians from Asia who ought to have been steadfast (2 Tim. i. 15); on the other hand the Apostle sends his last message of love to Aquila and Priscilla (2 Tim. iv. 19), and reminds his dear son Timotheus of the tears which were shed when they parted (2 Tim. i. 4), of the days they had spent together in time of persecution (2 Tim. iii. 10, 11), and of still earlier days, when Timotheus himself was a boy under the care of Lois and Eunice (2 Tim. i. 5).

The Faithless and the Faithful

With all this it is most instructive to contrast the solemn—almost stern and peremptory tone—in which he urges the duty of unswerving stedfastness, patient suffering, and unceasing labour, on his son Timotheus, "Be not ashamed of the testimony of

Parting Messages

our Lord, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel" (2 Tim. i. 8). "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. ii. 3). "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us" (verse 12). "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12). "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing, preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 5). Never was so solemn a series of injunctions given under circumstances so affecting. As to the spirit which Paul himself maintained to the last, it is enough to quote his own words: "I suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day" (2 Tim. i. 12). "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. i. 7, 8).

And now this Apostle is free for ever from suffering, and rests from his labours—his victory

won—the great end of his life secured. His body reposes outside the city, not far from the pavement of that road, which his footsteps trod when first he came with Julius to Rome. In our notice of Athens, reference was made to *Paradise Regained;* and once more the words of Milton set before us that other city in the character most appropriate to our subject, when he reminds us that it was the very centre of power and of busy communication with all the world, and shows us "prætors" and "proconsuls," "embassies," "legions and turms of horse"—"to their provinces hasting or on return"—"in various habits on the Appian road."[1] "All the glory which those ancient roads witnessed has passed away, but St Paul's work remains; that work which he was then doing, as the great Pioneer of the Gospel, the Apostolic Road-maker of an Appian Way for the Prince of Peace; a work which was heeded by none of the noble, the great, and the powerful, who travelled then on the Appian Way.

Freedom at Last

But that Apostolic Road remains; it is a living, a growing Road, branching ever into new lands, and opening the way to new conquests; and it is much more enduring than the solid volcanic blocks of the pavement of this great 'Queen of Roads'; for it is the Road which was made by the power

[1] *Paradise Regained*, iv. 61-69.

of Him who is 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life' (John xiv. 6), and it leads to the 'Eternal City,' 'the City which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.'"[1]

[1] Archdeacon Wordsworth's *Tour in Italy* (2nd ed.), vol. ii. pp. 216, 217.

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